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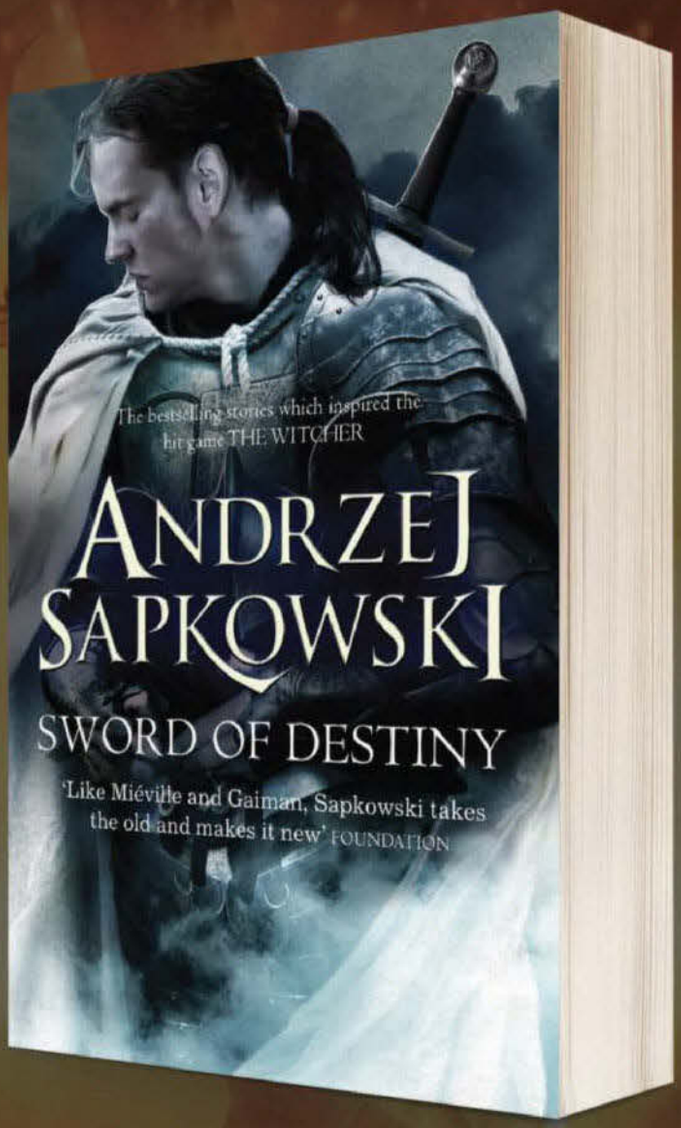
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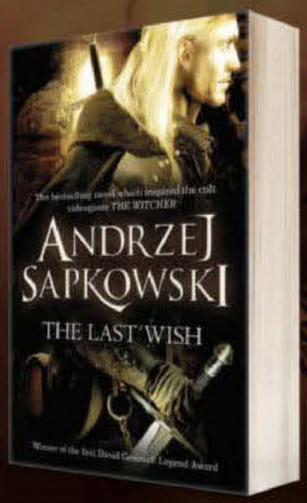
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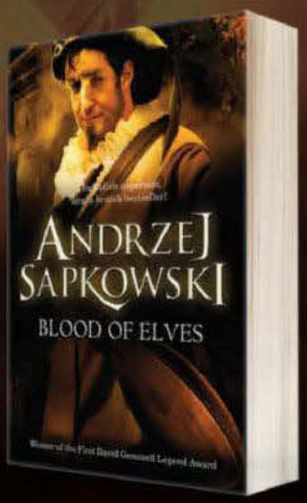
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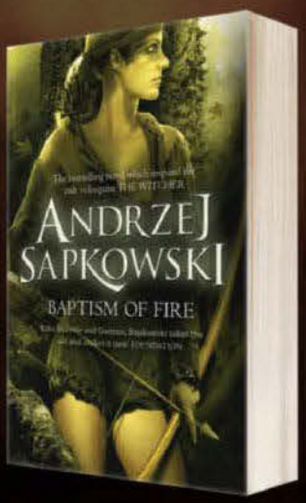
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GO HAM OR GO HOME



RETURNING TO DESTINY has been difficult. Hundreds of hours in the company of Geralt, weeks in the lab getting my *Mortal Kombat* skills down and a fair bit of time putting together the fine publication you hold in your hands have all done a good job of keeping me busy, so returning to competitive Crucible play after such a long absence was a humbling experience. We got smashed in Trials Of Osiris (to the point that a two-person team managed to steal a win off us...) but by the time Iron Banner rolled around, the skills were coming back. And now I have a decent grasp of the new maps and have been blessed by the return of my former skills, I'm loving it again. Oh no.

This time, I was fortunate enough to be able to hit the level cap in the first week, so there's no pressure to grind out Raids with my fingers crossed anymore. I can take my time and enjoy the game on my own terms, which lately seems to involve going ham in the Crucible. I've not really been any good at an online shooter since my *Counter-Strike* days, so it's making a nice change from my usual diet of hunting and rhythm action games. But I'll be back.

Thing is, I've got a lot to play and not a lot of time to play it all. Before I know it, *Rock Band 4*, *Guitar Hero Live* and *Amplitude* will be upon us, and that'll be me out of the game for the foreseeable future while I chase incrementally larger numbers and rock out with my mates. For many, this stands to be a musical renaissance but considering I still play *Rock Band 3* on a pretty much weekly basis (with any downtime spent with *Blitz* or *Hatsune Miku*), it's simply a continuation of greatness to me. A continuation that will take place on Xbox One for me, admittedly (all my DLC is on 360, and there's no *way* I'm leaving that vast catalogue behind), but we all have to make sacrifices sometimes.

Enjoy the issue and I'll see ya online...

LUKE ALBIGÉS
EDITOR
@LukemonMGJ
PSN: PorthMinster



CURRENTLY PLAYING
Destiny (PS4)



PLAY Contents

Look at the tiny cannon on that dude's arm. It's too good...

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50 PS4 BLOCKBUSTERS
Greatness awaits, and it's all right here

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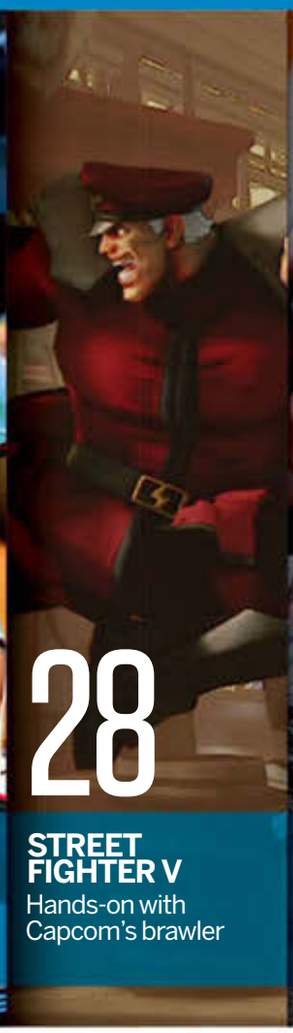








FIFA 16
It's literally going on forever



STREET FIGHTER V
Hands-on with Capcom's brawler



THE VR VERDICT
Future or fad? Find out for yourself



THE BEST STAR WARS GAMES
The Force is strong with these ones



WOLFENSTEIN THE OLD BLOOD
Bloodborne told us to fear it, so we do



WORST WAYS TO DIE
Not like this... not like this...

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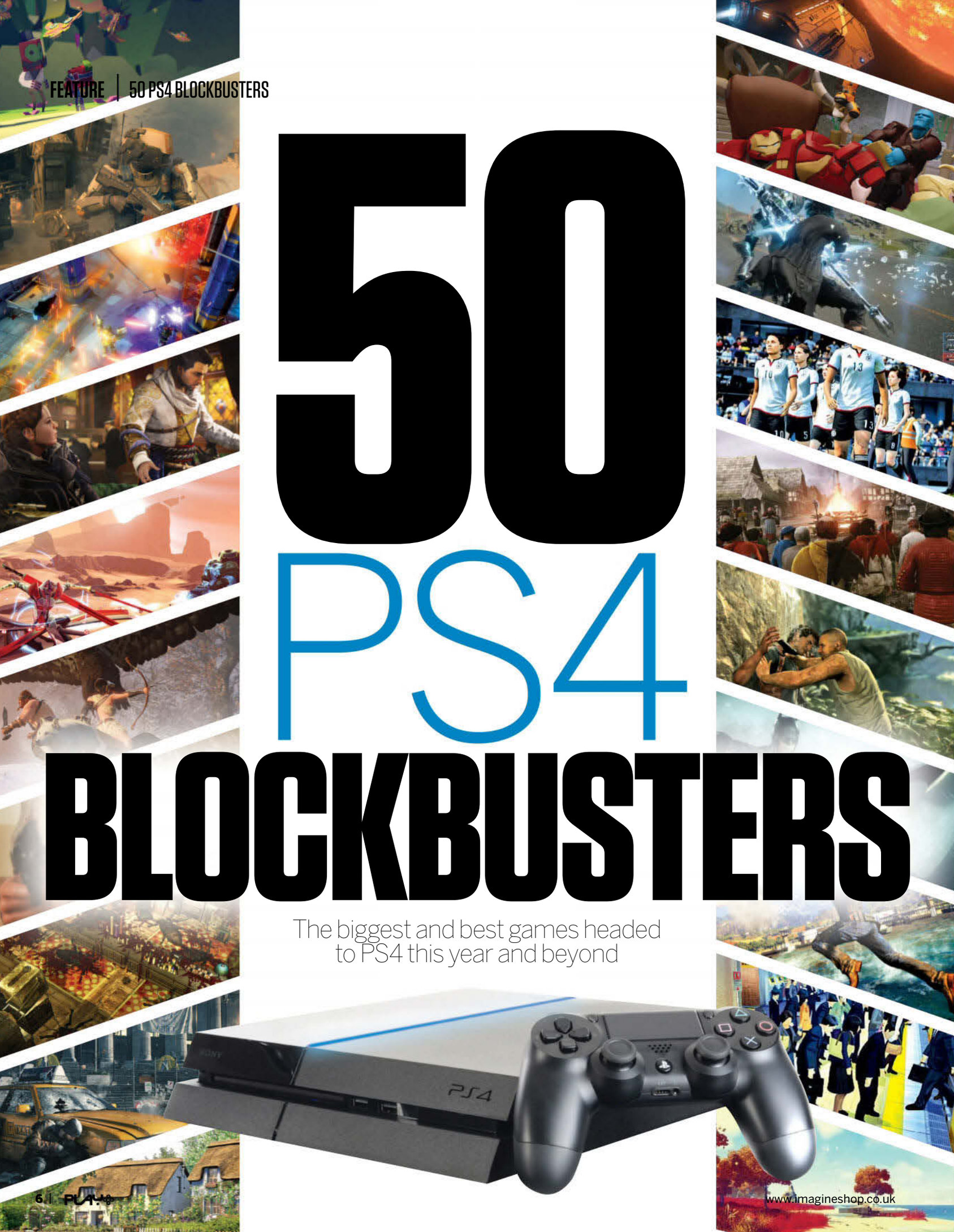
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50 PS4 BLOCKBUSTERS

The biggest and best games headed to PS4 this year and beyond



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1 Uncharted 4: A Thief's End

What better way to kick off a feature about the avalanche of awesome that is headed for PS4 than with the biggest game of the lot? Naughty Dog is one of the best studios in the world and has a history of making PlayStation platforms sing like no other developer can, so all eyes are on the Santa Monica-based team to see what the PS4 can *really* do. Everything we've seen so far is extremely impressive and while it's not quite up to the crystal-clear 60fps glory of the reveal trailer, it still looks the business. Everything is that much smoother and more lifelike than ever, really helping to give the cinematic action that extra punch and really take Naughty Dog's explosive presentation to the next level.

All this visual and mechanical improvement is welcome, of course, but it's expected – as Naughty Dog's first purpose-built PS4 release, *Uncharted 4* was always going to be a showpiece for the console. Multiplayer too was a given, though we're hoping that the promise of earlier modes in *Uncharted 2* and *Uncharted 3* have been infused with a little of the ingenuity and flavour of *The Last Of Us*' unexpectedly excellent online suite. No, the thing that interests us most at this point is where the team will be taking Drake on what could be his final voyage. The game's subtitle suggests his downfall and even if Naughty Dog bottles it and doesn't end up killing Drake off, there's still that 'one last time' line from the original trailer that implies that this will be the end of his story. It'd be a bold move to kill off such an iconic a character, but we know from *The Last Of Us* that there's a gritty side to the studio that never really came out in Drake's action movie hijinks or Crash's playful leaping. Perhaps Jak's sell-out sequels helped with this – Naughty Dog can look to them to see exactly how to get dark, moody and gritty totally wrong.

Even the argument that Sony would never allow Drake to die doesn't hold water. Just look at any other series – characters die all the time, and it seldom means you've seen the last of them. *Assassin's Creed* fans still can't move for reverential references to that Desmond chump, while *The Phantom Pain*'s Big Boss is a character who has been dead (in our time) for the best part of a decade. Side-stories, spin-offs, prequels, reboots... anything is possible even if Drake did utter his last 'oh crap' next year. Or better yet, let someone else have a crack at the starring role – the series has produced plenty of great characters and you need only look at *The Last Of Us* to see how quickly Naughty Dog is able to create a bond between players and characters...

2 Mad Max

When it comes to open world games, it seems that the fashion is to fill them with as much stuff as possible. For that reason, we like the idea of playing one that is set in a stark desert landscape. We're also liking the scavenging element of *Mad Max*, whereby you have to search for resources to upgrade your car. The obviously *Arkham*-esque combat is less original, but we're still looking forward to checking the game out come 4 September.

5 Batman: Arkham Knight

"We'd always planned to do a trilogy of games so the final piece of the puzzle for us was, how do we wrap all this up as a singular complete ultimate Batman experience?" – Rocksteady producer Dax Ginn. It's going to be fascinating to see how well Rocksteady has implemented the Batmobile – the answer to the question posed by Ginn – in *Arkham Knight*. If it gets it right, this could be the spectacular finale the *Arkham* series (and potentially Batman himself) deserves.



△○×□ *Arkham Knight* looks to be one hell of a series closer...



3 Just Cause 3

When it's not busy working on *Mad Max*, Avalanche is preparing to release the next instalment in the *Just Cause* series. We've seen Rico backflipping off sports cars, hijacking mid-air jets, knocking down statues with a van attached to a helicopter and firing RPGs while standing on top of an plane. Avalanche hasn't forgotten what makes *Just Cause* fun, then.



△○×□ Open world sandboxes don't come much sillier than *Just Cause*. Explosions everywhere, man...



4 FIFA 16

Another year, another *FIFA*. It'll obviously win the battle when it comes to sales, but for us the challenge is to see if it can best *PES* when it comes to quality. We are worried that all the turmoil going on at Konami could see *PES* stumble, but if it can continue its upward curve, it's going to be pretty tough for *FIFA* to regain its crown.









△○×□ It's easy to be sceptical about *No Man's Sky*, but the scale of the universe alone makes it interesting.

6 No Man's Sky

With over 18 quintillion planets appearing in its universe, it's going to have no problem taking the title of the PS4's biggest game. No one's questioning if *No Man's Sky* is impressive from a technical perspective, however. The true test is whether that universe will actually be any fun to inhabit. We know the game will have combat, trading and exploration, but we need to a hands-on before we can judge if those things are actually as compelling as we hope.

7 Street Fighter V

Sony's botched port of *Ultra Street Fighter IV* hasn't exactly filled the fighting game community with confidence for this true sequel, but they haven't played it. We have, and it's already coming together well, with interesting new mechanics, reworked characters and a clean and tidy presentation clearly geared as much around viewers as players. Check out our full hands-on breakdown on page 28 for all the latest gameplay details.



△○×□ Bison's new design and move set are both awesome. We can't wait to see more characters now...

8 Tom Clancy's The Division

Oh dear, delayed again. This time until 2016. Multiple delays can be a cause for concern, but in this case, our instinct is that those delays are more a reflection of the fact that Ubisoft announced the game far too early, rather than that the game is suffering a troubled development per se. Fingers crossed Ubisoft's online MMO third-person shooter matches up to the concept, because we do like our online shooters.







△○×□ Both games in the *Clancy* double bill look excellent to us.

9 Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege

If you like your shooters to be tactical, then this will be the game for you. *Siege* places a strong focus on team play and strategy, with the fact that the game's got no respawns meaning that you have to take a considered approach to achieving your objectives. It's also got awesome destructibility, allowing you to shoot your way through walls, floors and ceilings, or even use a charge to blow a hole clean through them.



10 Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain

Now with bears!

We were expecting wildlife after seeing sheep get the Fulton treatment for comic effect, but we weren't expecting to be attacked by bloody massive bears. As in games like *Red Dead Redemption* and *Far Cry 4*, animals represent a legitimate and constantly terrifying threat as you explore the world. How many critters can YOU send back to Mother Base?

It's huge

Not that it's exactly 'new' information when one of the first things to fall out of Ocelot's mouth in the initial trailer was 'Afghanistan is a big place', but it really is incredible just how big the play space in *The Phantom Pain* really is. This is just one area, too – it's been hinted by other trailers and Kojima himself that there'll be even more to explore in the final game.

Nanomachines, son

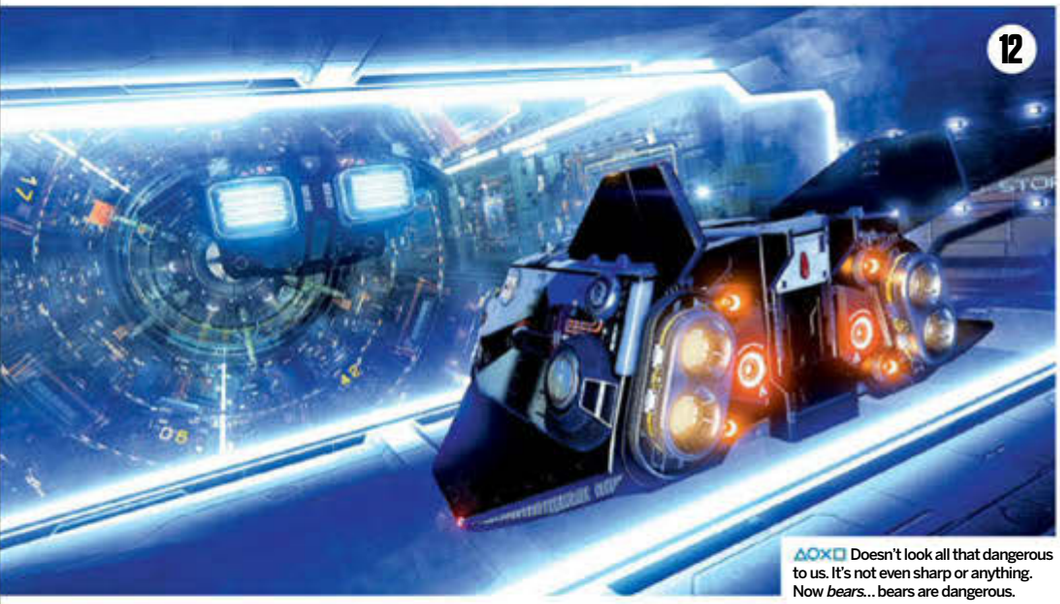
You won't just be up against soldiers, military hardware and angry wildlife – in true *Metal Gear* fashion, you'll have to take on a bunch of super-soldiers as well. These 'Skulls' (no prizes for guessing who they work for) are augmented fighting machines that present a real challenge. Don't assume your cardboard box trickery to work on these guys, basically.

The clean-up

Over the course of the game, Snake will get covered in blood and dirt. You can wear your sins with pride if you like (just like the bloodied Big Boss in last year's trailer) or head back to Mother Base, where there are showers you can use to wash away all the filth. Dirty Snake is the best Snake. That piece of shrapnel, however, looks like it is here to stay.

More to come

As with every *Metal Gear* game before it, Konami is still keeping elements of *The Phantom Pain* under lock and key. But what we have seen and played is so damn exciting – and that's before we've even hit maximum Kojima mode. It could be that the best is yet to come, in which case the final product will be utterly incredible and one hell of a swan song for Kojima.



△○×□ Doesn't look all that dangerous to us. It's not even sharp or anything. Now *bears*... bears are dangerous.





△○×□ It looked great on PS3, but *GOWIII* on PS4 melts faces.



△○×□ Rural villages don't feature in nearly enough games. Stop buying all the shooty-gun-bang-war games, you savages.





△○×□ The first game only came to Xbox platforms and PC, but it's pretty good.

11 Kingdom Come: Deliverance

Think of *Kingdom Come* as *Skyrim*, without the fantasy. Set in the Medieval period, the game is set against the backdrop of a civil war. Branching dialogue and the option to complete missions in a variety of ways will give you control over how you engage with those events. What's really intrigued us is the game's combat. You'll be able to choose to attack specific parts of the body and feint attacks in order to trick your enemies.

12 Elite: Dangerous

With *No Man's Sky* coming to PS4, you might be wondering why we need another space sim. Well, for one thing, that's a bit like saying, 'we've got *Call Of Duty*, so we don't need any other shooters'. Regardless, *Elite: Dangerous* is a different game to *No Man's Sky*. Think of *Elite* as more of a in-depth version of *No Man's Sky* with one hell of a pedigree – the classic original came out in 1984.

13 God Of War

The remaster of *III* is coming next month, which will be a delicious appetiser for the main course of a purpose-built new entry in the series exclusively for PS4. No word yet on when that will arrive but given the series' prior form, expect it to raise the bar in terms of presentation and give even *The Order* a run for its money from a graphical standpoint. Who doesn't love Kratos?

14 Everybody's Gone To The Rapture

Perhaps we're biased because it's set in our home country, but there's something incredibly appealing about the idea of a post-apocalyptic game set in a quintessential English village. You just don't expect those two things to go together and that's what makes *Everybody's Gone To The Rapture* so interesting. For those of you who love narrative-based games, this is one that you should definitely keep your eye on.

15 Disgaea 5

Where other RPG series have changed significantly over the years, *Disgaea* has remained loyal to its tactical combat system. That system is far more complex then what you will find in many other RPGs, so this is a go-to game for those of you who like a challenge and who like the reward of delving into and mastering a deep combat system.

16 Titanfall 2

We hate to admit it but *Titanfall* was a good game – its blend of free-running and gunplay made us rather envious when it came to Xbox One. Thank god, then, that when Respawn gets to refine the formula it established with the first game with *Titanfall 2*, we won't be missing out on PS4, with both EA and Respawn confirming that the next game in the series will be coming to PlayStation.

17 Persona 5

We might not have to wait as long for *Persona 5* as we thought. We knew the game was scheduled to hit Japan in Q4 2015, but we had expected a bit of delay before Atlus got the game out in other territories. However, it now looks like the developer wants *Persona 5* to hit the US before the year is out. Fingers crossed us Europeans won't be missing out in 2015, because the game is looking wonderful. Along with the usual mix of JRPG combat, psychology and social simulation, it looks like *Persona 5* is making some welcome changes to the series. Chief among those is the design of its dungeons, which have been pretty boring in the past. This time around, they are not only more appealing from a visual perspective, but look like they will be far more interesting to navigate, with mild platforming and perhaps even some kind of stealth mechanic changing the way that you will move through them.

18 WWE 2K16

The last entry in 2K's *WWE* series made a few positive steps forward, but was a disappointment overall. In truth, 2K hasn't really grabbed the series by the scruff off the neck in the way we'd hoped since it took the reins (we're not talking about Roman). Please, please, *please* give us a decent career mode and make the changes to the in-ring action that the series so sorely needs ahead of its 27 October release date!

19 Until Dawn

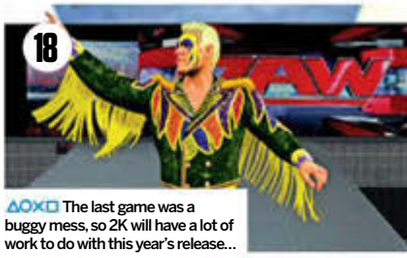
Can *Until Dawn* ever be as fun as when the audience shouted out what options the developer should take as he played the game live on stage at PlayStation Experience? Possibly not. Still, we do like our choice-based games, so this horror slasher meets *Heavy Rain*-style title could yet win us over. The key for *Until Dawn* is for it to make it feel like its choices matter (or at least disguise the fact that they don't). If it can do that, then it should be a pretty fun ride.

20 Call Of Duty: Black Ops III

It's had the piss taken out of it by *Deus Ex* developers for looking like their game, it's been accused of looking like *Advanced Warfare*... surely things can only get better for *Black Ops III*? Well, it's *Call Of Duty* and *Call Of Duty* is always a big success come release day, so we doubt those behind it will be worrying too much. Still, from our perspective, we've seen things like boost jumps and wall-running before. We'd like to see something more than underwater shooting to convince us that *Black Ops III* is bringing something new to the table. Hopefully that'll emerge as we see more of the game in the months leading up to its release.







△○×□ The last game was a buggy mess, so 2K will have a lot of work to do with this year's release...



△○×□ If you're a fan of Quantic Dream games, *Until Dawn* should be right up your proverbial street.







△○×□ Yup, it sure looks like a *Call Of Duty* game. What did you expect?

21 Assassin's Creed Syndicate



UNDER THE HOOD

For some reason, Jacob seems to think that wandering around London with a hood up is somehow less suspicious than simply wearing a hat about town like everybody else. The fool. Still, stupid as it may be, it does at least offer a visual clue as to whether you're in 'explore' or 'murder' modes (those aren't official names, obviously). Does he have somebody following him around the whole time to pick up and return his discarded hats? We'd like to think so.

LESSON LEARNED?

Unity's launch didn't go so well, but we know based on prior form that Ubisoft is more than capable of launching expansive games successfully – *Far Cry* has had a cracking run in this regard and even within the *Assassin's Creed* series, the likes of *ACII* and *Black Flag* have been solid from the off. The publisher knows it can't afford another mistake, so will be doing everything it can to get the game working properly from day one. You know, like all of them obviously should.

GIVE 'IM THE STICK

If you picked the Threaded Cane as your starter weapon in *Bloodborne* (the correct choice, of course), you'll be glad to see the same blend of lethality and practicality showcased here. As you might expect, the cane hides a deadly blade, although we're not sure you will be able to use the stick itself as a secondary form of attack a la *Bloodborne*. It'd be cool, yeah, but we're not convinced it'd be particularly smart when the alternative is so much sharper...

DOUBLE TROUBLE

We've got two protagonists this time round – a pair of twins by the names of Jacob and Evie Frye. Hopefully the pair will offer gameplay differences and we'll have full freedom to explore as either one of them – *Lego* game-style areas that are inaccessible to one but can be reached by the other would make for an interesting reason to fully explore the streets of London. Which, interestingly, is apparently 30 per cent larger than *Unity*'s Paris, which itself was pretty big. Cor blimey, guv.

22 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 5

We're big fans of the *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* series, so were delighted to hear that it will be returning when the fifth entry comes to PS4 this year. We do have some concerns, though. The team that's developing the game, *Robomodo*, is responsible for the awful *Tony Hawk's Ride*; it was the now defunct Neversoft that made the original games. In fairness to Robomodo, though, we don't think anyone could have made a decent skateboarding game if the brief was that it had to use a stupid skateboard peripheral. Let's give the team a chance to show that they can bring *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* back to its glory days.

23 Bloodstained: Ritual Of The Night

Bloodstained is a 2D, exploration-heavy action platformer with a gothic theme. If that makes it sound a little like *Castlevania: Symphony Of The Night*, then you're getting the right idea. The game has been brought to Kickstarter by Koji Igarashi, co-director of *Symphony Of The Night* and is pitched as something of a spiritual sequel to that game. With the game raking in over $3.2 million from Kickstarter backers at the time of writing, *Bloodstained* has absolutely smashed its initial $500,000 goal six times over.

24 PlanetSide 2

It's been on the slate for ages now but finally, the large-scale online shooter will be landing on PS4 this month. It's free-to-play and the sheer scope of the game puts most other shooters to shame. Hundreds of soldiers can be involved in any given fight, with even more doing their bit in the wider faction war elsewhere. Get involved if you even vaguely enjoy online shooters – it's free, so there's no reason not to give it a crack for yourself.





△○×□ Yes, it looks pretty ropey. But as long as Hawk's return plays well, we absolutely will not care about graphics.





△○×□ With thousands of people online, just imagine the fights over who gets to drive the last tank...





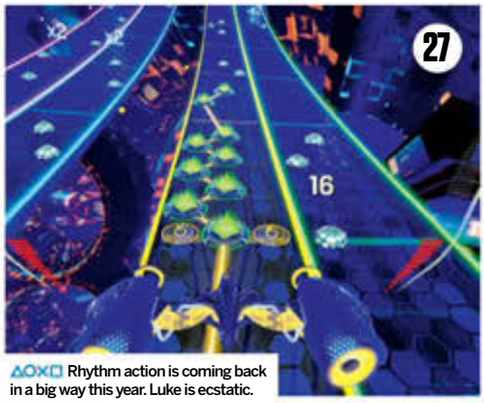




△○×□ Doesn't exactly look as cool as its concept art, does it? Still, at least it's likely to be good fun...







△○×□ Rhythm action is coming back in a big way this year. Luke is ecstatic.





△○×□ The style of *Mirror's Edge* is absolutely phenomenal. Just look at it!

25 Mighty No. 9

Don't call him Mega Man, because *Mighty No. 9*'s star definitely isn't Mega Man (it is). If you do happen to like *Mega Man games*, though, the Kickstarted *Mighty No. 9* does look like it would be right up your street. It's almost as if *Mega Man* creator Keiji Inafune, who is heading up *Mighty No. 9*, did this on purpose...

26 Alienation

Alienation has been described by developer Housemarque as a cross between *Resogun* and *Dead Nation*, its previous games. As a top-down co-op shooter, the comparison with *Dead Nation* is more immediately obvious, the similarities with *Resogun* seemingly being more aesthetic in that it takes place in a sci-fi universe and stuff explodes a lot. Arguably, *Resogun* was the best game on PS4 at launch, so we are certainly eager to give this one a go when it releases, preferably with a full team of four players.

27 Amplitude

It's a good year for rhythm action. Not only are we getting the return of *Rock Band* and *Guitar Hero* this year, we're also getting a PS4 remake of *Amplitude*. We rate it as one of the best rhythm action games of all time, so if you missed out on it first time round on PS2, then we recommend giving it a shot.

28 Mirror's Edge

EA is not a publisher that's renowned for taking risks, but *Mirror's Edge* really was a risk. We'd never seen anything quite like it before and, though it's influenced other games, we haven't seen it since. That was a disappointment for many, because it felt like *Mirror's Edge* was a proof of concept that could be refined into something special. What good news it is, then, that EA has decided to return to the series. Get rid of those notoriously rubbish shooting sections of the first game and we will be all over this one in a flash.



29 Star Wars Battlefront

Four reasons it will be a Force to be reckoned with

1 It's Battlefield in space

Okay, so that's not entirely true – it's just the closest we really have in current gaming. Team-based modes feel familiar but there are unique elements that set the experience apart from its peers. Each side has a selection of classes to choose from, typically with more kills and captures unlocking more powerful versions and eventually allowing you to spawn in as a famous hero from the series. What better incentive to play well than the chance to be Vader?

2 DICE is in charge

Battlefield is our go-to shooter, and not just because of *COD*'s somewhat toxic community. The studio behind the *Battlefield* franchise has showcased amazing talent over the years and even though it managed to botch the launch of *BF4*, you have to wonder if the team would have shipped the game in that state without publisher pressure to do so. Now that it works, *BF4* is superb and the team's modern back catalogue doesn't have a single dud in it.

3 The hype is real

Star Wars is a big deal already but come the end of the year, it's going to go *nuts*. If the reaction to the trailer for the new film is anything to go by, the new movie could bring lapsed and new fans to the franchise alongside the legions of diehards – there's a chance it'll be the biggest movie in the franchise and the timing of DICE's game is perfect. There'll even be DLC once the film drops, allowing fans to get involved in the battle that sets up the movie.

4 It's something different

Franchise fatigue is really starting to set in with the likes of *COD* and *Assassin's Creed* falling onto shelves the same time every year, so this return to the popular *Battlefront* series is likely to interest those looking for a fresh experience. Changes like the lack of iron sights and optional third-person viewpoint help this stand apart from the usual shooter crowd too, plus there's a world of difference between hopping into a jet and getting your hands on an X-Wing.

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△○×□ If you translate those runes, it spells out 'we're really sorry *Heavenly Sword* was so bad'. Probably.

30 Hellblade

"The combat is very different from *DmC*. There, you had enemies all up around you, around your head, and you had to control them. This is different. In *Hellblade*, you are going to have an enemy right in front of you, and you're going to have to deal with them. That's it – between one and three enemies. We wanted to keep the camera intimate, so you could see the details of both your opponents and Senua. We needed to make each fight feel meaningful, that every enemy you defeat feels significant, like in regular one-on-one fighter games. We've taken a lot [of cues] from one-on-one fighters when developing the fighting system – mainly the idea that in those kinds of games you have to defeat your opponents over two rounds, or you fail. Game over. We kind of want that feeling with *Hellblade*: like it's life or death. So keeping the camera in that position makes you feel up closer to that fight and it makes you feel the pressure." – Ninja Theory's Dominic Matthews on *Hellblade*.

31 Doom

Creating a new entry in a series as revered as *Doom* is no easy task and, indeed, it's the desire to meet the kind of expectations that a game with the '*Doom*' moniker generates that's led to the game being scrapped in its incarnation as *Doom 4* and reworked into this new version. Let's just hope it can capture the magic of the original to some degree – it's got Revenants in it, so that's not a bad start.

32 Battleborn

The MOBA genre might be huge on PC, but it has not hit consoles yet. Could Gearbox, the team behind *Borderlands*, do that with *Battleborn*? One thing that helps the game is that its got a number of elements that will be familiar to those who have never touched a MOBA before. In fact, if you believe Gearbox head Randy Pitchford, it's not even a MOBA at all, but an "FPS; hobby-grade co-op campaign; genre-blended, multi-mode competitive e-sports; meta-growth, choice and epic *Battleborn* Heroes!" Whatever all that means.

33 Wasteland 2

If you like *Fallout*, we recommend you take a look at *Wasteland 2*. This Kickstarter success is the sequel to 1987's *Wasteland*, the game that laid the foundations for what would become *Fallout*. It is more similar to the older *Fallout* games in that it uses an isometric view and a tactical, turn-based combat system. That focus on choice as to how you build your character, who you wish to side with and how you approach your objectives that's been consistent throughout the *Fallout* games, though, is very much an important part of *Wasteland 2* as well.

34 Adrift

Could this be one of the PS4's first Project Morpheus games? It's possible, because developer threeonezero has openly talked about exploring VR in relation to the game. Whether that's the case or not, *Adrift* looks interesting. The game sees you floating in a damaged spacecraft in the wake of some kind of disaster. You're tasked with finding out what has happened and surviving.



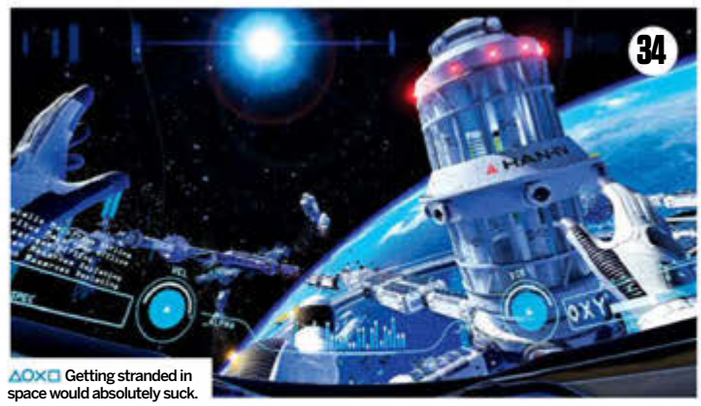
△○×□ After seeing how well the *Wolfenstein* sequel turned out, we're pretty pumped for *Doom*.











△○×□ Getting stranded in space would absolutely suck.

35 36 Rock Band 4 & Guitar Hero Live

There are a number of things that set returning rhythm action guitar kings, *Rock Band 4* and *Guitar Hero Live*, apart. The former, for example, is likely to be much better as a party game by virtue of its multi-instrument gameplay, while the latter is returning to its roots as a single-player score attack game. Surely the thing that matters the most is that they've got the songs we want to play. Here's a sample of the awesome setlists...

Rock Band 4

Avenged Sevenfold "Hail To The King"
Fleetwood Mac "You Make Loving Fun"
Jack White "Lazaretto"
The Killers "Somebody Told Me"
The Spin Doctors "Little Miss Can't Be Wrong"
The Who "The Seeker"

Guitar Hero Live

Royal Blood "Little Monster"
Marilyn Manson "Disposable Teens"
Killswitch Engage "In Due Time"
Marmozets "Move Shake Hide"
Of Mice & Men "Bones Exposed"
Deftones "Diamond Eyes"
Vista Chino "Sweet Remain"
Bring Me the Horizon "Shadow Moses"
Mastodon "High Road"
Trivium "Strife"
Halestorm "Love Bites (So Do I)"
Tenacious D "Tribute"
Beartooth "I Have A Problem"
Pearl Jam "Mind Your Manners"
Rise Against "Tragedy + Time"
Soundgarden "Been Away Too Long"
Anthrax "Got The Time"
Architects "Gravedigger"
Chevelle "The Clincher"
A Day To Remember "Right Back At It Again"
Weezer "Buddy Holly"

37 Wild

Wild Sheep Studio head Michel Ancel says that *Wild* will be the size of Europe, that it has dynamic weather and seasons, that it's filled with opportunities for interactions and that it will feel endless. He still hasn't really said what the game actually *is*, however. As best we can tell from what we've seen, the game is some kind of survival game with a focus on exploration. What we do know as that you can play as any creature you want – human, wolf, sheep, horse or even trout. Yes, you read that right; you can play as a trout.

38 Killing Floor 2

We're used to wave-based co-op multiplayer modes in all sorts of shooters, including the likes of *Call Of Duty* and *Destiny*, but how about a game that's built entirely around that concept? That's what you will get from *Killing Floor 2*, a game in which you and up to five other players must survive increasingly difficult waves of zombie-like creatures. Performing well in these showdowns will earn you cash to spend between rounds to buy better weapons and equipment and thus, help you survive the more difficult waves.

39 Tekken 7

The most notable change being made to *Tekken 7* is the introduction of a super system, or 'Rage Arts', in the game's parlance. When you take enough damage and find yourself with a tiny amount of health left, Rage Arts can be used to try and turn the tide back in your favour. Given that *Tekken*'s not had any kind of super system before, the change is something of a controversial one. It's only been announced for arcade so far, but there's less chance of it being the first *Tekken* to skip PlayStation than there is of Gon being in it.









△○×□ Fortunately, it's not a game about actually killing the floor. That would be both dull and unsafe.



△○×□ *RB4* is right near the top of the Play team's collective wish list.





△○×□ Hopefully the *India* and *Russia* episodes of *Chronicles* will address *China*'s shortcomings.

40 Assassin's Creed Chronicles

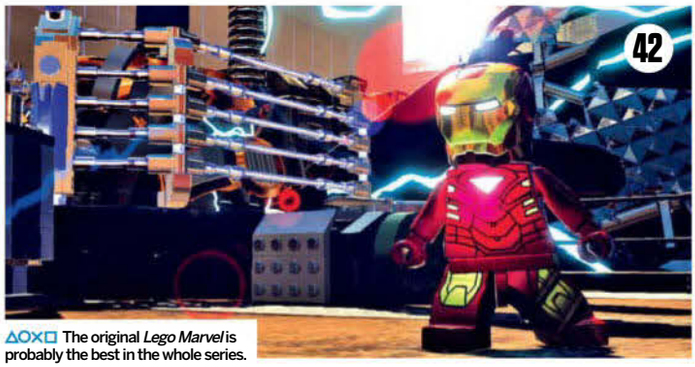
We liked what Ubisoft did with *Assassin's Creed Chronicles: China*, so it's cool that there are two more *Chronicles* games on the way set in India and Russia respectively. India seems to be the most platform-focused of the three games, reminding us of the classic *Prince Of Persia*, while Russia brings firearms into the equation. We look forward to getting our hands on them in the near future and seeing how they develop the *Assassin's Creed* formula.



41 Deus Ex: Mankind Divided

Eidos Montreal did a sterling job rebooting *Deus Ex* with *Human Revolution*. After all, the original *Deus Ex* is considered one of the best games of all time, which set lofty expectations that would have seen lesser developers floundering in its shadow. We can't wait to see how that legacy is continued in *Mankind Divided*, the sequel that follows directly on from *Human Revolution*. After the conclusion to *Human Revolution*, augmented citizens lost control of their minds and bodies, resulting in the death of millions. As a consequence, augmented humans are now outcasts.





△○×□ The original *Lego Marvel* is probably the best in the whole series.

42 Lego Marvel's Avengers

Lego Marvel Super Heroes is arguably the best Lego game there's been, so we've got high hopes for the next Marvel-themed *Lego* games, *Lego Marvel's Avengers*, which will follow the plot of the *Avengers Assemble* and *Age Of Ultron* movies. Does that mean that the game will pull back on *Marvel Avengers'* open world in favour of a more linear approach? We sincerely hope not.





△○×□ Anyone else reminded of *Metal Gear Solid*'s VR missions?

43 Volume

"I love modern stealth games, but one thing that's happened with stealth over the years is that we've added ambiguity to it. Can I be seen here? How close are the guards? That takes a ownership away from the player, which is fine if you're able to stab someone through the back of the neck or you can shoot people or whatever, but if you want to make a pure stealth game now with no death, no killing – if you were to try and do it in that way, you'd very quickly run into a situation where the game becomes frustrating. With *Volume*, the objective was to take away killing, but I'm going to make you so aware of your environment. By doing that, you can push those systems and you can trust those systems. There are moments of safety which encourage you to use interesting gadgets, or play with guards and mess around. As players become aware that they're not playing a game that's going to kick them in the head without explaining to them why, a switch clicks and you see people turn into ninjas and it is going to be awesome." – Mike Bithell, *Volume*'s creator.



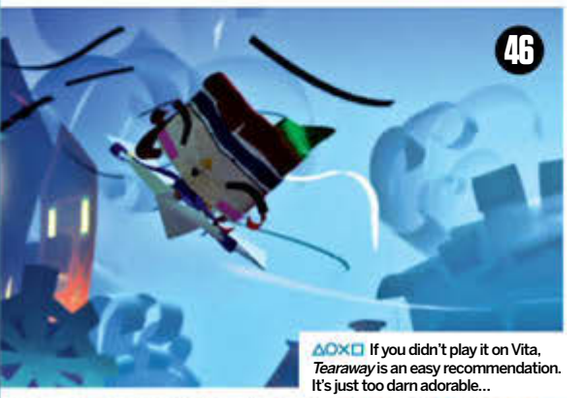
44 Final Fantasy XV

If *FFXIII* was the worst thing to happen to Square's popular RPG series, it stands to reason that *XIV*'s reboot with *A Realm Reborn* was one of the best in recent memory. While the *XIII* trilogy seemed to show a team only getting further and further away from what fans want from a typical RPG, the MMO evolution told a different story – one of a developer actively responding to feedback in order to iterate and improve a game and doing so brilliantly. Indeed, Square has already updated the *Episode Duscae* demo in line with fan feedback, tweaking and improving key elements of the game and suggesting that the initial release was worlds away from the true quality we can expect from the final product. That's rather good news, as *Duscae* already hinted at great things even before the update. The open world setting seems to work well and there's a degree of freedom more in line with MMOs and epic Western RPGs than your typical JRPG – it's an evolution we saw rise up through the *XIII* trilogy, moving from extremely linear story to menu-based time jaunt to mini-sandboxes in *Lightning Returns*. Right now, *XV* would certainly stand to benefit from having a little more life and action in its world as it feels a little empty, but that'll come naturally as more sidequests and features are layered in – the high encounter rate, particularly when night falls, isn't exactly the best substitute for having actual stuff to do and the team would do well to look at *The Witcher 3* to see how densely a huge map can be packed with content. The action-centric gameplay works well (as we expected it would after *Lightning Returns*) and again, *Duscae*'s update shows improvements already. New co-op attacks and enhanced aerial combat both feel more in line with character action games like *DMC* than the usual wait-for-gauge-to-fill fare, and there's a distinct satisfaction in nailing a perfect parry that you simply can't get from menu-driven battle systems. Despite how much it has already improved in so short a time, though, a 2015 release still feels a little optimistic for a game this big. The updated *Duscae* demo is there to scratch the itch in the meantime, so we'd rather Square kept the main game in the oven until it's absolutely ready – in this era of day one patches and games releasing broken and buggy, something as huge and ambitious as this really can't afford to release in an unfinished state.

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△○×□ This is *GT6* – the incoming PS4 sequel will look way better.



△○×□ If you didn't play it on Vita, *Tearaway* is an easy recommendation. It's just too darn adorable...









△○×□ We didn't really get on with it when last we played it. Given the team's pedigree, though, we'll give it another shot.

45 Gran Turismo 7

With *Project Cars* not quite matching up to our expectations, attention has to turn towards *Gran Turismo*. We don't yet know when it will be coming, but creator Kazunori Yamauchi has hinted that it'll be some time in 2015 or 2016. The *GT* games have usually been a great way of showing of the power of PlayStation consoles, so we're eager to see what the seventh entry can do with the PS4.

46 Tearaway Unfolded

We knew that *Tearaway Unfolded* was going to be more than a straight-up port of the excellent Vita version, but the time that Media Molecule is spending on it suggests that the scope of the game is far greater than we were expecting. That's great news, because we loved *Tearaway* on the Vita, so the idea of getting a pseudo-sequel on PS4 is music to our ears.

47 Disney Infinity 3.0

Disney's take on *Skylanders*, *Disney Infinity*, is going to have plenty of competition on its hands, not only going up against that series, but *Lego Dimensions* too. *3.0*'s got an ace up its sleeve, however: *Star Wars*. With the latest film, set to release this year it makes sense, then, that it is *Star Wars* that will be the focus for *Disney Infinity 3.0*.

48 Fallout 4

A last-minute addition to this list (it was announced just hours before we sent this issue to print), Bethesda has finally dropped the bomb and *Fallout 4* is a real thing. The first trailer suggests that the team is going for scale over looks – it seems visually a little rough but the epic vistas make up for it somewhat. There's also the suggestion that it could feature pre-nuke scenes, which would be sweet.

49 Dragon Quest Heroes

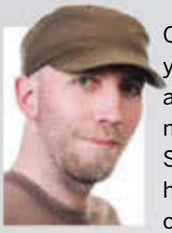
The quirky and colourful *Dragon Quest Heroes* will task you with taking on multiple enemies from the *Dragon Quest* series at a time. The difference between this game and the other *Dragon Quest* titles is that this one borrows from *Dynasty Warriors*, making it a far more action-heavy experience than fans of the series might have come to expect.

50 The Tomorrow Children

We're not quite sure where we stand on *The Tomorrow Children*. While we were intrigued by the concept of this online, *Minecraft*-esque resource management game, our hands-on time did little to convince us that it would actually be any fun to play. Still, that alpha test was some time ago, meaning that the developers have had plenty of time to improve on the game.

THE TOYS GO WINDING DOWN

Is the bubble about to burst for the toy/game crossover market?



Oh *Skylanders*, what have you done? What started as an ingenious and borderline magical way of bringing Spyro back from the dead has descended into an all-out bloodbath and while Activision may have been first to market with this technology, it is getting so crowded out there now that I don't see this as a battle that can be won by a cast of original characters with increasingly contrived pun names.

Such was the popularity of the *Skylanders* franchise that other publishers were always going to want a piece of the pie – it's hard to keep ten-figure revenue sums on the down-low after all, especially if you go shouting about them in press releases. Disney moved relatively quickly to counter with *Infinity*, drawing on a near-endless supply of popular franchises in the process and delivering a product which was more toy than game itself. There was – and is – room for both, especially given the different experiences they offer. Then Nintendo unleashed its Amiibo range, which might have hurt *Skylanders* and *Infinity* more were people able to actually buy the borderline pointless Nintendo NFC figures without having to pre-order them decades in advance of release. And now, a fourth player is poised to raise the stakes, and there's a chance it could have the strongest hand of the lot.

Lego has a universal appeal that transcends age, language and culture barriers for the most part. So in a smart move that cashes in on a decade of success stories with *Lego* video games, *Lego Dimensions* is set to serve as the toy/game hybrid for fans of... well, *everything*. As broad as *Disney Infinity* may have cast its net, its success was still limited by the bespoke figures and rigid boundaries of the properties from which it could draw. *Lego Dimensions* laughs in the face of such limitations – the game isn't even out yet and yet it already has figure lines announced that cover *Back To The Future*, *The Simpsons*, *Lord Of The Rings*, *Scooby Doo*, DC, *Portal*, *Doctor Who*, *Ghostbusters*, *Jurassic Park* and more. Given how much fans would geek out over a standard Lego set based on any of these properties, the chance to own game-compatible toys based on some of the biggest IPs out there has sold people on *Dimensions* before we even know if it's any good.







'Some' is the key word in that last sentence, though, since the four-way competition in the toy/game sector this year stands to limit what each can do. There'll be no *Lego Star Wars* action while *Infinity* still exists, for instance, and Activision is going to have to pull out all the stops in order to compete with literally the biggest pop culture brands imaginable. I'm not entirely sure adding vehicles constitutes pulling out all the stops but hey, establishment goes a long way – kids with armies of *Skylanders* aren't likely to want (or be allowed, for that matter) to leave all their plastic friends for dead and jump ship, and that's precisely where things get messy.

Two NFC tech franchises was manageable. Even three was fine, if only on the basis that Nintendo only seems to make about 11 of each Amiibo anyway. But four? When two of them have near free rein to draft in whoever and whatever they like? No, we're done. Disney had the upper hand in this fight in terms of well-known brands until Lego jumped in, ticked the 'Other' box and wrote itself a blank cheque. Now we're in free-for-all territory and just as Nintendo fans might buy a Kirby Amiibo just for the geek chic factor, *Lego Dimensions* and *Disney Infinity 3.0* can offer the same deal to fans of franchises with far broader reach. Fanbases stand to be splintered, announcement after tactical counter-pick announcement forcing fans to choose sides in this, the most pathetic and yet still oddly entertaining war ever fought.

"LEGO HAS APPEAL THAT TRANSCENDS AGE, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE BARRIERS"



And don't get me started on how badly Nintendo has misplayed this. All it would have taken was a complete run of *Pokémon* figures and the Amiibo line would already have this in the bag. But somehow, Nintendo missed a timely and obvious gap in the market and now stands to be sidelined by firms with more universal clout. It's too late now. I'm glad it didn't happen – well, my wallet is, at least – but going toe-to-toe on even terms with the biggest and most relevant and popular brands on the market isn't going to end well when all you really have are cartoon squids and variants of the same plumbers and monkeys. Apes. Whatever.

The truth is that few households have the cash to support all of these pillars, and that one or more will crumble as a result. *Skylanders* has legacy on its side, while the others will be scrambling to leverage other, lucrative fan bases that stand to play enthusiasts off against one another based on how much they like certain things. It's crunch time for this market and I can't help but feel that we will lose at least one of our digital magicians this year.



INDIEVELOPMENT

Our indie expert Paul Walker-Emig delves into the exciting, strange and intriguing world of indie development to pick out the best of what's coming to PlayStation





△○×□ Not only does it have multiple dinosaurs, *Ark* has got pretty impressive visuals as well.

△○×□ The battle to find the biggest dinosaur to ride may have already been won.



WE MAY HAVE survival games already on their way to PS4 in the form of *DayZ* and *H1Z1*, but we've got nothing quite like **ARK: SURVIVAL EVOLVED**. That's because this game has dinosaurs. At the start of the game, you'll find yourself chucked onto an island populated by real-life players (and those dinosaurs, of course) and must hunt, craft items and build shelters to survive. As the game progresses, you will be able to gain more powerful weapons, grow crops and build huge fortresses to cement your foothold in the world. Best of all, you can tame and ride dinosaurs, including pterodactyls that let you take to the skies. The idea of exploring the world and building yourself a compound filled with tamed dinosaurs, as if the team behind *Minecraft* had decided to make a *Jurassic Park* game, is cool in and of itself. As is always the case with these games, though, it's the fact that the island is populated by other players that will make it interesting. You just know that for every survivor that's willing to team up with you to hunt dino meat and build a fortress, there's someone that's going to come crashing through your gates riding a stegosaurus, doing their best to trample you underfoot.

You're more likely to find people willing to cooperate in **SUPER DUNGEON BROS**, being as the game is a four-player co-op dungeon crawler and all. That is, apart from those moments when you decide to exploit the ability to throw your companions at enemies or across gaps in order to chuck them off the edge of the level. That's not an oversight on the designers part, by the way, but rather a reflection of the fact that this is not a game that takes itself too seriously. The game is supposed to be about having fun with friends and the game's developers are well aware that trolling each other is part of that. We've gone hands-on with the game's procedurally generated dungeons and, while the game is still in the early stages of development, you can see the potential for a fun co-op experience in there. If you're hankering for another *Castle Crashers* or *Helldivers* to play, it might be worth keeping an eye on how *Super Dungeon Bros* brovelops.

ABZÛ offers a far more muted experience; unsurprising given that there are two people who worked on the excellent *Journey* behind it in former Thatgamecompany artist Matt Nava and composer Austin Wintroy. There's a great deal of mystery around *Abzû*, with Nava cautious about giving too much away. Indeed, that sense of mystery permeates the game's atmosphere as you explore its underwater world. Like *Journey*, it seems that what you find in



DEV DIARY

Developer Michael Frauenhofer gives the latest on *One Way Trip*

One Way Trip has a much larger variety of enemies, abilities, and weapons than our last game, *Demon Chic*, so we've been learning a lot about balancing a more complex system as we go. It's almost impossible to fully plan in advance with this, so we have tried to keep to a core set of tenets. So far, we have been focusing on making it so that everything has multiple strategies that can counteract it in order to allow for expressive play and keeping numbers small. Therefore, strategic choices stay easy to weigh quickly – when comparing our options, we would rather have our enemies with something manageable like 15 HP than 5,000 HP!

that world will be open to interpretation, with the game featuring no dialogue or written text. Nava has talked about creating meaningful interactions with the game's wildlife that goes beyond the trope of treating them as resources to be harvested. There are hints that the game could prove to be a little more surreal than what we've seen of it so far would suggest. The game's meditative tone and accomplished aesthetics makes us eager to get hold of it and find out for ourselves. Given the pedigree of those behind the game, perhaps we'll be lucky enough to discover a game that will follow in *Journey*'s footsteps as the next PlayStation indie triumph.

While we wouldn't necessarily say that *Abzû* is a great name for a game, it's better than **MAGNETIC: CAGE CLOSED**, which is, quite frankly, rubbish. Let's not worry about the name, though, let's worry about the game, which is looking pretty cool. The obvious comparison point is *Portal*; *Magnetic* is





△○×□ The underwater world of *Abzû* really is looking beautiful.

"YOU CAN TAME AND RIDE DINOSAURS, INCLUDING PTERODACTYLS"

△○×□ The warden of the prison in which you are trapped repeatedly tells you, "there's always a way out". That's good, because this looks dangerous.







about progressing through a series of puzzle rooms to escape a prison using a gun that allows you to manipulate your environment. In this case, you've got a magnet gun that allows you to repel or attract objects, or, if they're heavier than you, yourself, through the air. One of the things that makes *Magnetic* stand out is that the game's developers say that each playthrough will be different, by virtue of the fact that you will be presented with different puzzle rooms. Are we expecting *Magnetic: Cage Closed* to live up to the *Portal* games that have so obviously influenced it? No, but that doesn't mean we don't want to play it.

FUNDED

BLOODSTAINED: RITUAL OF THE NIGHT

PLATFORMS: PS4
ETA: MARCH 2017



Plenty of people would bite your hand off for another *Castlevania: Symphony Of The Night*. That's why *Bloodstained: Ritual Of The Night*, headed up by *SOTN* assistant director Koji Igarashi, absolutely smashed its Kickstarter goal. The game promises to return to the gothic exploration-focused action platforming that made *SOTN* so great. If it's as good as that game, we're in for a treat.

WISHLIST

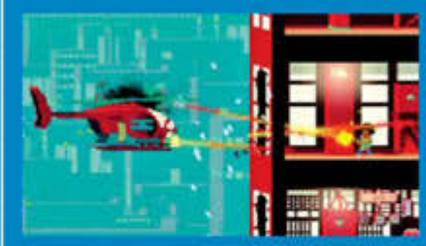
CRAWL



The developers behind *Crawl*, Powerhoof, have made no secret of the fact that they'd like to bring the game to PS4 once it is out of early access on PC. Hopefully that'll prove to be the case, because this dungeon crawler has a brilliant concept at the heart of it. The monsters that you have to defeat as you progress through the dungeon are controlled by other players. Kill the protagonist as a monster and roles are reversed, with you taking on the role of the dungeon crawler.

IF YOU LOVE...

BULLETSTORM



If you like silly shooters, then we heartily recommend you grab yourself *Not A Hero* on PS4 – it's pretty good.

ETA SEPTEMBER | **DEV** EA CANADA | **PUB** EA SPORTS | **TWITTER** @EASPORTSFIFA

FIFA 16

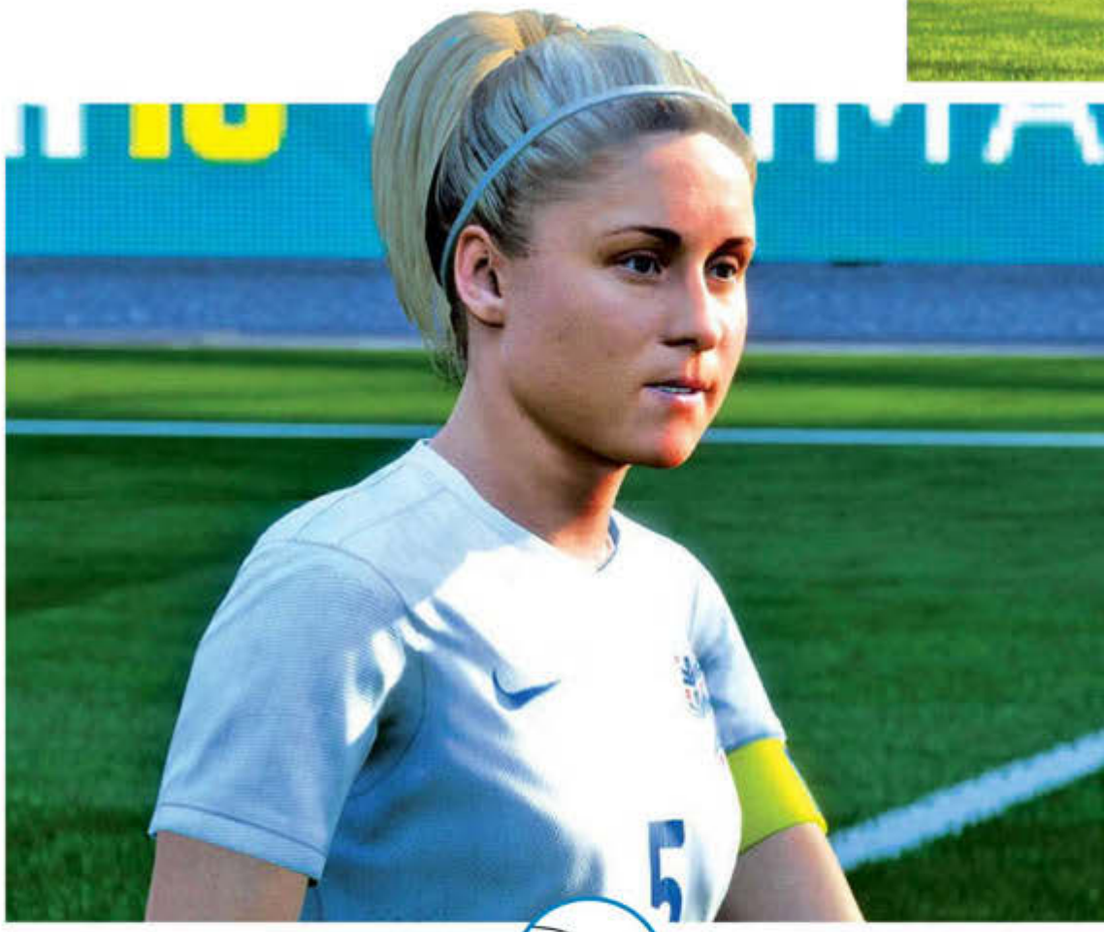
In the game

PS4 ALSO COMING TO PS3

MANY WILL STILL argue that it has taken far too long to happen – us included – but EA's annual love letter to the beautiful game will finally include women's football this year. By now, you'll have seen the reveal trailer with its 'In the game' mantra still firm in your mind. It marks a step forward for a franchise that, considering its size and exposure, has a substantial responsibility to represent the sport in an accurate and inclusive manner. The mid-Noughties brought the inclusion of lower league teams and in the last couple of years we've seen more leagues and teams from overseas introduced to the game, and now the final piece of the puzzle has been popped into place.

The female game is watched and enjoyed by many, and, of course, is exactly the same as the male component, so in terms of general gameplay there shouldn't be any difference at all. The trailer also revealed several female players performing in a mo-cap studio, meaning that, like the more well-known male players, the women's teams will be populated with real, recognisable individuals. It is a little bit sad to see quite a small pool of teams, all of which are national teams, as there are some excellent club sides out there as well. However judging by EA's aptitude for including more teams and more diverse leagues every year, we wouldn't be surprised to see more and more women's teams added to the game every year.

The available teams are England, USA, Germany, France, Sweden, Brazil, Canada, Australia, Spain, China, Italy and Mexico, so a decent mixture for the first outing. Using women's teams, you can compete in normal Match Day events as well as an offline tournament mode and online friendly matches. Strangely, you'll only be able to play against other women's teams if you play as one yourself, which makes sense in terms of realism but also serves to segregate the female teams more than is strictly necessary.



Obviously, much more will be announced over the coming months, and not just in terms of women's football. As is tradition, there will more than likely be one specific focus in terms of updates to *FIFA* this year. Last year the focal point was goalkeepers, and the fact that they'd been radically overhauled and behaved like real keepers. True enough, if the keeper in question is David James while he was at Liverpool, as they really weren't much better and still flapped at corners. We'd love to see more improvements in this area. *FIFA 15* was a superb package overall, and yet long-standing defensive problems remained. We'd like to see EA make some real progress in terms of fixing these lingering issues,

> "STRANGELY, YOU'LL ONLY BE ABLE TO PLAY AGAINST OTHER WOMEN'S TEAMS IF YOU PLAY AS ONE YOURSELF"



SHARE THIS

MOVING FORWARD

Foot like a traction engine

You know the score here, we feel. There aren't many games better for recording video – as in the real game, there's nothing better than a decent highlight reel full of incredible goals and stunning mishaps. However, at the risk of sounding like we're on a crusade, this year, your first mash of the Share button should be when you've scored a worldy with a female player – you are recording the future of sports games.





△○×□ It's actually quite refreshing to be able to run a reveal preview for a *FIFA* game without seeing the same old obvious faces...



△○×□ We had hoped EA would skip the last-gen versions and focus on PS4, but no such luck.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△ At long last EA has included female players in the game – it took long enough!

□ The best footy experience around, offering better graphics and presentation than *PES*.

× The series hit an all-time high with *FIFA 15* – this one can only be better. Probably.

○ It's *FIFA*. Here lies one of the best multiplayer games out there.

as well as simple things like players struggling to stay goal-side of their opponents and refusing to automatically come to the ball.

FIFA 16 is sure to purvey the kind of attention to detail and presentation that only *FIFA* can achieve, with improvements to last year's match day aesthetic and more graphical improvements a shoo-in. With the addition of female teams, EA's behemoth is cementing its position as the complete football package in a way that *PES* hasn't. We're sad to see negative and bigoted comments following the announcement, and urge you to be smart and to ignore them. This is progress, and although it's a case of 'better late than never', should set an example for other sports games, as *COD* has done for shooters.

Steve Holmes

FIFA 16 is doing keepy-ups in the car park all the way across the pond at EA Canada. For more info head to **www.easports.com/fifa**



△○×□ It seems like women's teams will only be usable in a small selection of modes. Still, it's a good start, right?



△○×□ Ryu is definitely the fighter to pick up, at this stage at least, due to the fact that he has the ability to parry. And who doesn't love to parry?

ETA Q1 2016 | **DEV** CAPCOM | **PUB** CAPCOM | **TWITTER** @STREETFIGHTER

Street Fighter V

The Alpha to Other Ocean's Omega

PS4

FINALLY. IF YOU'RE in any way interested in fighting games, you'll understand our pain in trying to work out new gameplay systems by simply watching brief snippets of footage and attempting to extrapolate what is actually going on. But finally, by picking up a stick and actually getting first-hand involved in the chaos that is *Street Fighter V*, we have a far better understanding of what we're dealing with here. This ain't no Cash4Ports tin-pot conversion – it's the real deal, a brand new game with exciting new mechanics that we can't wait to explore, expand and exploit when we get more than an afternoon with the game. In all but name, you're looking at *Street Fighter Alpha 4*. That in itself is pretty freaking exciting.

So yeah, gameplay. Around the initial reveal, people started throwing around *3rd Strike* comparisons without really knowing what they were talking about – turns out *SFIII* is probably the game that *Street Fighter V* is *least* like mechanically, although there are certainly nods to that crowd in the new system. Somewhat similar to *SFIII*'s Personal Action system (read: taunts with benefits), each character has a V-Skill ability, now triggered by hitting MK and MP at once, just as you would have charged a Focus Attack in *SFIV*. Instead of an armoured attack, though, the act of hitting both mids now differs for each character – Bison grabs projectiles and tosses them back, for instance, while Ryu gets a catch-all parry that you can simply mash out after the first hit of multi-hit attacks, *Battle Fantasia*-style, to *Assassin's Creed* your way to you very own Evo Moment #37. That'll be fixed later, obviously (hopefully?) as right now, it makes Ryu by far the best character – as neat as Chun Li's low-angle jump and Birdie's versatile snacking may be, the ability to turn anything aside is worth way more than any unique attacking options. Bison and Charlie can both do something similar but with their pseudo-parries limited to projectiles, Ryu still comes out on top.

There's also the V-Trigger ability, replacing *SFIV*'s Ultra as a comeback mechanic of sorts – all of the ones we've seen take the form of time-limited buffs (bar Charlie, who gets a single-use teleport), immediately dispelling the threat of the scrubby wakeup Ultra and the ability to turn around a losing match with a lucky nuke. Now, a late comeback will require far more skill and a thorough understanding of what each buff does to your move properties, as it seems like there'll be scope for new, more potent combos when powered up. Interestingly, the V-gauge varies in size between characters. Charlie's short gauge fills quickly when taking hits, for instance, while Bison's three-stock bar takes a lot of damage to fill. The reward is worth it, though – charged with psycho power, Bison's dashes and jumps become teleports and he is *terrifying* to face. The same gauge also fuels an *Alpha*-like counter system, where one stock can be used to break out of a block string and put some space between you and your opponent. Unless one of the V-Triggers turns out to be supremely powerful, expect to see pros using meter to break pressure rather than saving up for something big.



"SFIII IS PROBABLY THE GAME THAT STREET FIGHTER V IS LEAST LIKE MECHANICALLY"

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ The visuals build upon the style of *SFIV*, adding in new elemental flourishes.
- □ The V-gauge gets rid of easy Ultra comebacks, which is splendid news.
- ✕ Elements of *Street Fighter III* and the *Alpha* games creep in to delight fans.
- ○ Ryu can parry. Games with parries in are 491 per cent better than those without.

Elsewhere, there are some clear nods to the Twitch generation that make any given situation easy to read. The HUD is tidy, with even the stun gauge freely visible and visual flourishes like breakable objects adding to the spectacle. Character-specific abilities and multiple uses for meter both make it more interesting to watch too, and it doesn't feel quite as defensive as *SFIV* – the fact that it's harder to make moves safe now could see slower, more considered play although on the flipside, V-Trigger buffs and the revived *Alpha* counter system both suggest that rushdown play will still be viable. Such concerns are for another time, when the roster has more than six characters. In the meantime, you can get you stick hands warmed up for the beta in July. We'll see you online – we'll be the ones playing as Ryu.

Luke Albigés

STREET FIGHTER V is locked away in the training stage, working on its combos with Capcom. Check the website for more details: **www.streetfighter.com**



△○✕□ As much as we're glad to see him, we're not too fond of Charlie. We'd much prefer to pick up Bison, as he's more of a powerhouse.

ETA 1 SEPTEMBER | **DEV** AVALANCHE STUDIOS | **PUB** WARNER BROS. | **TWITTER** @MADMAXGAME

Mad Max

So shiny! So chrome!

PS4

ALTHOUGH THE FUNDAMENTALS of the *Mad Max* game and its recent spiritual brother, *Fury Road*, are aiming for quite different things, they do share a fair amount of DNA. Firstly, and most importantly, they both exist implicitly within the *Mad Max* universe. That is to say, they use the series tropes, yet no-one really knows where they fit in the overall canon of the franchise. We like that, it's less patronising, more open to interpretation.

Secondly, both have had a long gestation period: the film has been spinning around development circles since 1998, and the game itself has been developed for well over four years. Now, that's not as impressive as its silver screen counterpart, but for a game... well, it's better than the usual one-year rush jobs we so often get hurled at us.

Mad Max franchise auteur George Miller took time away from the *Fury Road* to feed into the game's lore during the concurrent movie/game development. As such, we've got an authentic adventure set in the barren wastes of Australia, freshly thought up by one of the most well-regarded action movie writers of this generation.

But Warner didn't want Miller's cinematic leanings to get too embedded in the game – after the pre-production period was over, the work and all the notes Miller had made were taken to Avalanche Studios, where Warner dropped all the collected work and said: 'Go, do what you do best, and build a world of *chaos*.' We're paraphrasing sure, but that may as well have actually happened.

The *Just Cause* developer set to work; creating cars for you to ride in (piecemeal metal engines that just want to go *fast*), creating War Boy-esque antagonists for you to decimate and run over,



www.imagineshop.co.uk

IN THE MEANTIME...

Fallout: New Vegas Yes, it's riddled with bugs, and yes, it's on old-gen, but *New Vegas* remains the best post-apocalypse playground we've wandered around in.



"CHOOSE YOUR BATTLES CAREFULLY – THE PEOPLE OF THE WASTELAND ARE FAMOUSLY UNKIND TO THEIR CAPTIVES..."

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- You get to be Mad Max.
- You get to make custom vehicles from the scrap that you find in the wasteland.
- It explores the mythos that's established in the new *Mad Max* film, *Fury Road*.
- It's *Just Cause: Mad Max* – and that's good considering Avalanche's track record.



△○×□ We hope that the combat is as visceral as it is in the films.

creating a hand-to-hand battle system reminiscent of something like the offspring of the *Arkham* games, *Assassin's Creed* and a little bit of *The Witcher*. These elements combine to make a *Mad Max* game that focuses on three main areas: exploration, construction and combat.

The construction part of that is the most exciting for us. Max's main goal in the game is to build his Magnum Opus – the very best car in the wasteland. To this end, Max teams up with Chum – his very own War Boy – and together they scour the wastes, looking for the very best components available to build this crazy vehicle.

Like the film, the core narrative thread is incredibly simple. But it's around that central conceit the game grows: the wasteland is being taken over by brutal warlord Scabrous Scrotus – a nasty bastard that's pressuring factions further away from any kind of resource left. These factions specialise in different things – one has an affinity for tires, one for armour, and another for weapons. By doing favours for factions, Max can earn rewards tied to that faction. Don't expect to get on all of their good sides easily, though; we imagine there's quite a lot of tension between them.

Of course, by helping out his enemies, you're going to irritate Scrotus more than any sane man should. And he's going to come after you (well, he'll send his War Boys after you, the coward). A huge part of the *Mad Max* experience is vehicular combat: you take the wheel whilst Chum sits behind you, a solid AI counterpart with a craving for blood. If that ever gets a bit too repetitive, though, you can take to the guns yourself, raiding anything from outposts to established settlements; choose your battles carefully, though – the people of the wasteland are famously unkind to their captives...

Fury Road is a film set apart from its contemporaries in so many ways, it's almost unbelievable. As action films go, it's a masterclass in simple narrative, character progression and cinematography. The game has a lot to live up to, and while it's unfair to compare the two entities, we can't help but do so. We just hope – for Avalanche's sake – it manages to do justice to the IP.

Dom Peppiatt

MAD MAX is being stripped apart and developed by Avalanche Studios, and releases on 1 September. Find out more here: **madmaxgame.com**

ANATOMY OF... ADAM JENSEN

Rebooting a true classic like Deus Ex was no easy task, but Eidos Montreal pulled it off with Human Revolution. Protagonist Adam Jensen is set to return in the next Deus Ex game, Mankind Divided, so let's take a look at the augmented hero...

HUMAN ASCENDANT

In *Human Revolution*, Jensen was kitted out with a wealth of enhancements after barely surviving an attack on Sarif Industries. You were able to upgrade those abilities, giving you more options as to how to approach each situation. No doubt, that RPG-style progression will return in some fashion in *Mankind Divided*.

CYBORG PARIAH

The ending to *Human Revolution* was left down to you as the player, but there is, of course, a canon ending that's carried over to *Mankind Divided*. After the Illuminati caused all transhumans to go berserk at the end of the first game, those with augmentations have become feared. Now, Jensen is now part of a task force that tracks and captures augmented terrorists.

MY WAY

One of the best things about *Human Revolution* (and *Deus Ex* in general) is the fact that there are multiple ways to approach each scenario. It's possible to avoid conflict altogether by using your social augs to pry information from an NPC or by hacking a terminal. You an also choose to build Jensen to be a walking tank. In which case, you can just break out your biggest guns and waltz on through.

SCOPE FOR CHANGE

It looks as if *Mankind Divided* will extend the series' focus on choice to Jensen's arsenal, giving you the ability to customise weapons with different scopes, muzzles, ammo and so on. Personally, we prefer to take the stealthy route whenever possible, so anything that we can equip with a silencer and a scope to help us sneak through is okay in our book.

ETA 2016 | **PUB** SQUARE ENIX | **DEV** EIDOS MONTREAL | **TWITTER** @DEUSEX

Deus Ex: Mankind Divided PS4

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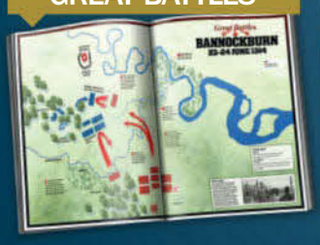
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ETA Q4 2015 | **DEV** AVALANCHE STUDIOS | **PUB** SQUARE ENIX | **TWITTER** @JUSTCAUSE

Just Cause 3

Looks like team Avalanche is blasting off again

PS4

IF WE HAD to pick out one thing from what we've seen of *Just Cause 3* that sums up the series – and that's no easy task, because developer Avalanche has shown off a lot of over-the-top stuff – we'll go for the moment when protagonist Rico flies towards a statue in a chopper with a vehicle tethered to it hanging below and uses said vehicle as a improvised wrecking ball to smash the statue into pieces.

The point, if you've not got it yet, is that *Just Cause* is a series that enables you to create spectacular and silly moments as and when you please. Glide through the sky in a wingsuit, land on a jet, hijack it in midair and then crash it into an oil rig, if that's what you fancy. Or, tether a couple of enemies to your car and start doing doughnuts in a field of sunflowers, it that's what floats your boat. You'll find something to suit your tastes.

It's cool to see that Avalanche is making a couple of changes to the series to remove some of the barriers to the fun, too. You will now have access to infinite C4, for example, rather than having to pay for it using in-game cash, meaning that you will never be at a loss when you want to make something go boom.

That goes for supply drops as well. No longer will you have to worry about your bank balance if you want to drop in, for example, a tank. Fortunately, Avalanche says that the game's difficulty will scale depending on what equipment you have, with enemies gaining access to equipment that will help them to counteract whatever you're packing – that should help to keep the game challenging, despite the removal of the currency limitation.

We like what we're seeing of *Just Cause 3*, now we just want to get our hands on it and see if it's as fun to play as it looks.

Paul Walker-Emig

JUST CAUSE 3 is being tethered together at Avalanche Studios. Check the website for more details: **justcause.com**





△○×□ Do you like your open world games to be realistic? Yeah... this one's not for you

www.imagineshop.co.uk

IN THE MEANTIME...

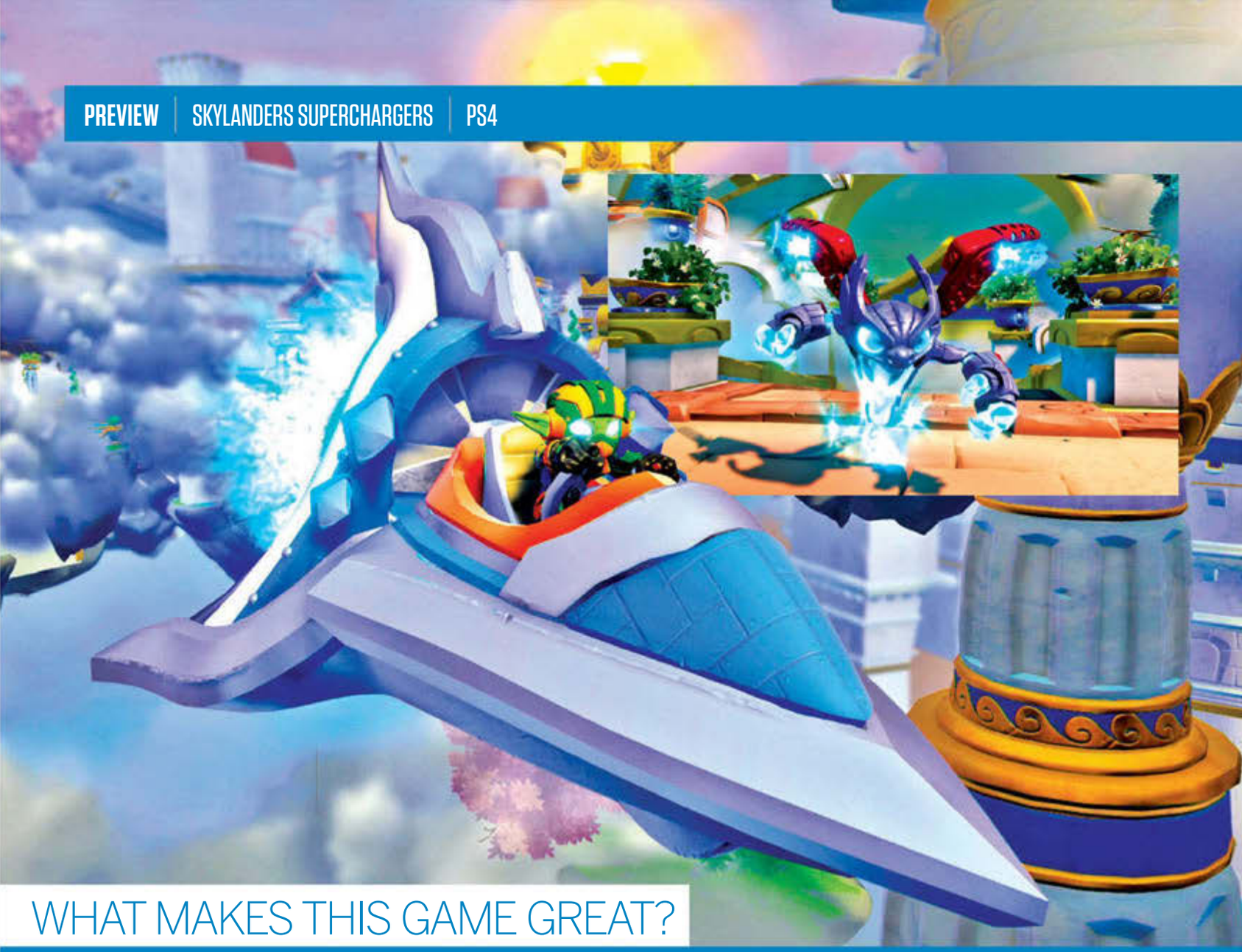
MAD MAX Avalanche's other open world game, *Mad Max*, looks like it'll be hitting the shelves before *Just Cause 3*. It is a little bleak but will pack an explosive punch...

"TETHER A COUPLE OF ENEMIES TO YOUR CAR AND START DOING DOUGHNUTS IN A FIELD OF SUNFLOWERS"



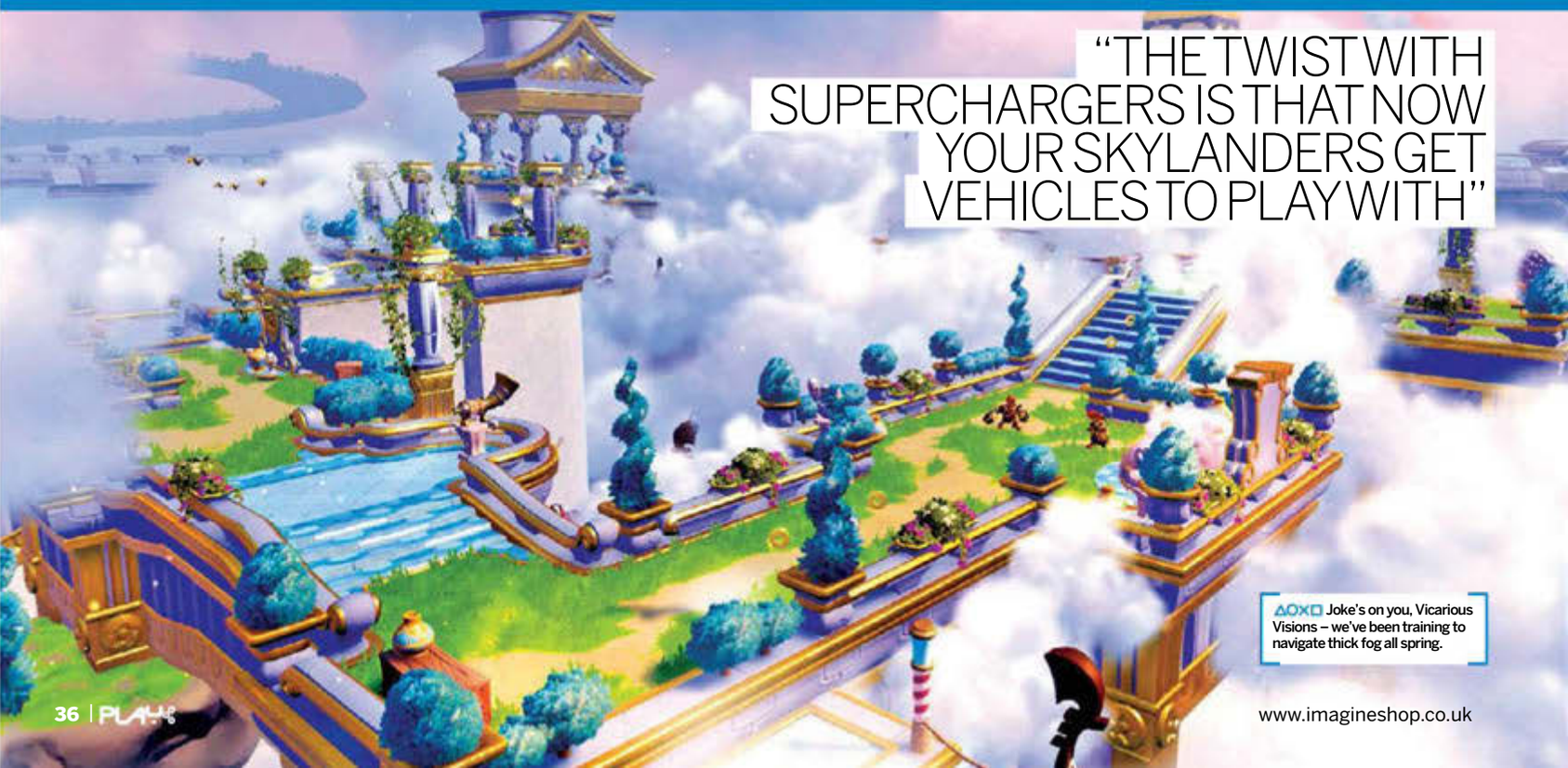


△○×□ **Rico doesn't fear anything. Grappling hook and hijack a burning helicopter? Sure. That's tame to Rico.**



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Being able to switch between charging about on foot and leaping into a vehicle.
- Upgrading your various vehicles with upgrades looks like an absolute blast.
- Incidentally, the toy vehicles are *proper* toys, with wheels and everything.
- And there 40 new figurines to collect, which is enough to justify putting up a new shelf.



"THE TWIST WITH SUPERCHARGERS IS THAT NOW YOUR SKYLANDERS GET VEHICLES TO PLAY WITH"

△○×□ Joke's on you, Vicarious Visions – we've been training to navigate thick fog all spring.

www.imagineshop.co.uk

SKYLANDERS: TRAP TEAM A PS4 *Skylanders* with an abundance of second-hand figurines, leaving you money to spend on stuff you need to survive... like food.

ETA 22 SEPTEMBER | **DEV** VICARIOUS VISIONS | **PUB** ACTIVISION | **TWITTER** @SKYLANDERSGAME

Skylanders SuperChargers

Riding the train/helicopter/submarine all the way to the bank

PS4

ALSO COMING TO PS3

THIS PREVIEW EVENT is making us uncomfortable. The press are sat in a modern-looking 'event space' in London. It's a standard layout for a hands-off preview: there's a lectern, behind which stands a developer talking earnestly about the game; another man off to the side playing the game and trying hard not die in front of his audience; and a whacking great TV in between.

The game looks fun. Like the *Skylanders* entries before it, the gist is that you're in a third-person, cartoon adventure game with characters you unlock by buying their corresponding toys and sitting them on a 'portal' – an RFID platform that identifies the figurine and magically materialises it into the game. The twist with *SuperChargers* is that now your Skylanders get vehicles to play with, and swapping different combinations on the portal sees wonderfully Pixar-ishly-animated characters bouncing in and out of cars, submarines, planes and so on, before zooming off to blow up (in the most PEGI 7 way possible) villains, henchpeople and beeping evil robots. It's jolly and it's very pretty. In our notes we scrawl: 'Wave effect in submarine section looks nice.' It really does.

What's notable about this event is the front row of the audience, which is populated by children. Perfectly unobjectionable in themselves, and clearly twice over the moon to be seeing the next *Skylanders* before it's out. They even get the first questions, and ask sensible things: will it have two-player co-op? It will. Is there a hovercraft? There is.

We have our reservations, though, as like *Skylanders* before it, much of the actual game in *SuperChargers* is locked off until you shell out for the vehicle, at the behest of clamouring children for whom cost isn't a consideration.

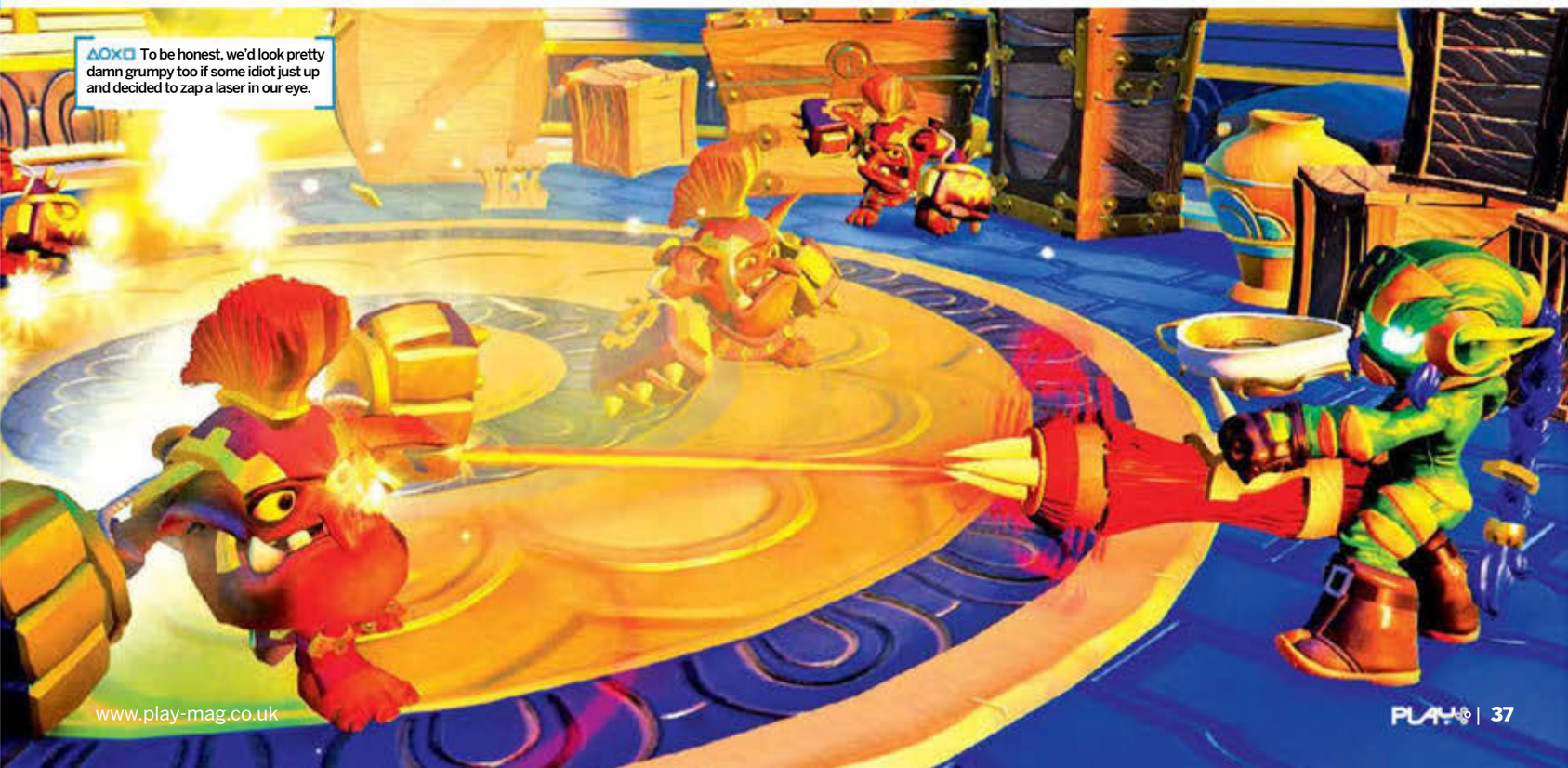
For instance, a section on show sees you shooting down enemy aircraft in a fighter jet whilst weaving through hoops for extra points. An equally lively segment sees you in a torpedo-firing submersible, ducking underwater to avoid spikes and then having a showdown with a rotating-laser machine (really nice wave effects in this bit, by the way). Or rather, *will* see you in a submarine/plane, provided you've bought the matching toys. If you haven't, you're stuck with the road sections you can drive with the car from the starting pack.

We know plenty of *Skylanders* fans have made peace with this. We know that, for some reason because it involves figurines, Activision gets a free pass for what is an incredibly egregious example of on-disc DLC. But here are the kickers (plural): First, when we sit down with Vicarious Visions president, Guha Bala, we ask how much of the level the initially inaccessible submarine and plane segments take up. The answer we get is that the main car and on-foot bits represent 100 per cent of the level, and the sub and plane are about an additional 50 per cent respectively on top of that. "So you have 200 per cent of game?" We ask, confused. "It's a bigger game," he replies. Sorry, but even with our collective B in GCSE Maths we know that isn't how maths works. We ask if this 50 per cent divide is true of the other levels in the game. It is. There will be 19 additional vehicles available to buy.

Of course, if you have already got multiple shelves sagging in the middle under your army of *Skylanders* figurines, disregard all of the above – you know what you're getting with *SuperChargers:* you're getting another *Skylanders* game, and that's fine. But if games like *Mortal Kombat* and *Batman* get a bad rap for roping off characters behind DLC paywalls at launch, then *Skylanders* doesn't get away with chaining up half a level in the game just because you get a toy when you pay to unlock it.

Rich Wordsworth

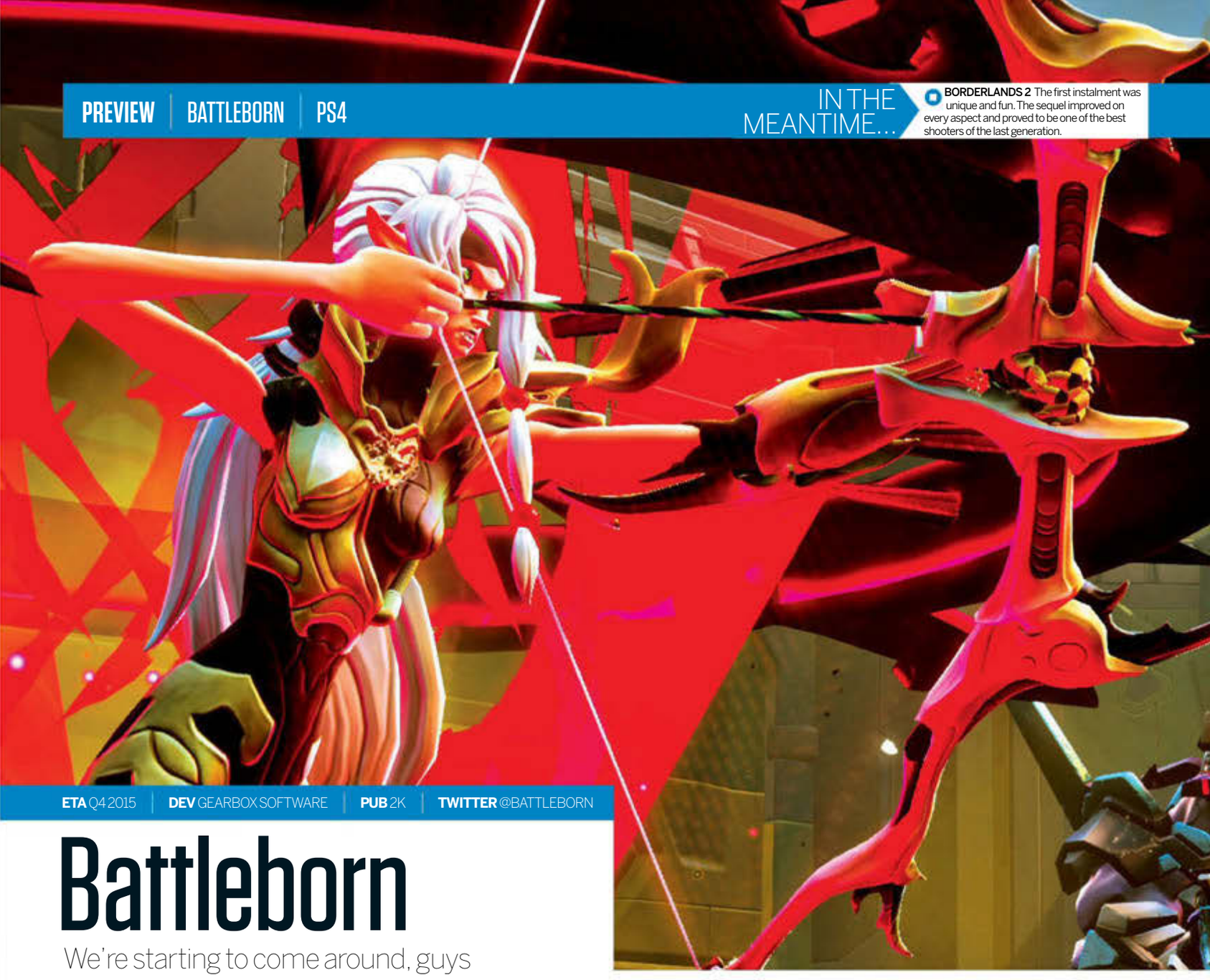
SKYLANDERS SUPERCHARGERS is being made 200 per cent bigger by Vicarious Visions. Check out the website for more details: **skylanders.com**



To be honest, we'd look pretty damn grumpy too if some idiot just up and decided to zap a laser in our eye.

IN THE MEANTIME...

BORDERLANDS 2 The first instalment was unique and fun. The sequel improved on every aspect and proved to be one of the best shooters of the last generation.



ETA Q4 2015 | **DEV** GEARBOX SOFTWARE | **PUB** 2K | **TWITTER** @BATTLEBORN

Battleborn

We're starting to come around, guys

PS4

WE'D BE FORGIVEN for having fallen off the hype train at this point, if there ever was one. Billed as a 'hero shooter', until now 2K has kept *Battleborn* well-hidden, with only small amounts of information emerging from the mire. Our guess was as good as yours up until this point, really, but by all accounts *Battleborn* has looked and sounded like a mixture of *Borderlands* and *League Of Legends*. Now, it has become apparent that with the inclusion of small-scale, competitive multiplayer and a huge roster of characters with different weapons and abilities, all played out in a strange dystopian universe and in first-person, we weren't far off.

Judging by the lack of real *Battleborn* information until now, we're not ashamed to have been a little sceptical. However, the comparison that we have drawn above, that *Battleborn* is basically *Borderlands* with a touch of MOBA fever, is a pretty exciting prospect. *Borderlands* is a fantastic franchise, and it looks like in this case, the Gearbox apple really hasn't fallen far from the tree.

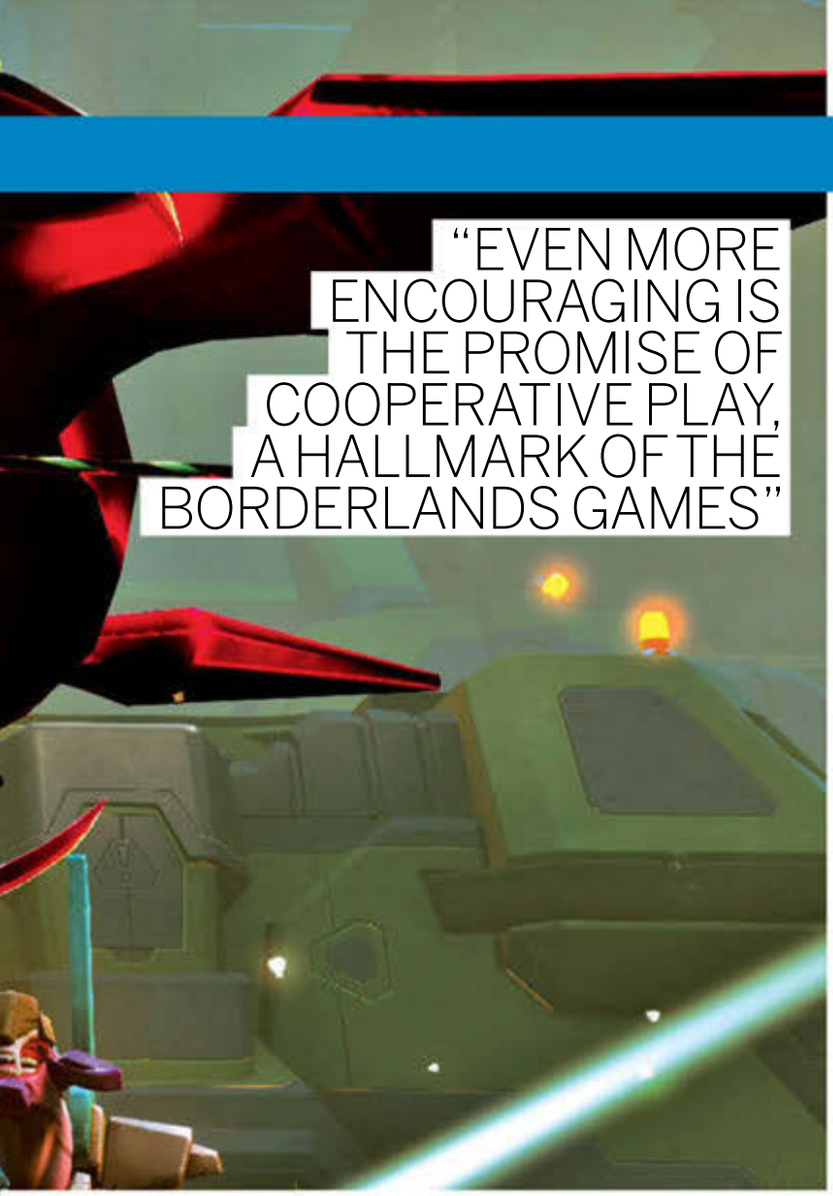
The big draw for *Battleborn* is that it will feature an extensive single-player campaign that is narrative driven and a roster of no less than 25 different playable characters. That's quite the variety, and one that has piqued our interest. Even more encouraging is the promise of cooperative play, that you can jump into with your pals either locally or online. We're always moaning about the lack of decent split-screen games on PS4, so this has made us pretty happy.

Of course, one of the one of the things that Gearbox got so right with the *Borderlands* games was the emphasis on feverish, horribly addictive loot drops, but at present it's unclear if *Battleborn* will follow suit. The idea that 25 different characters could each wield their own unique weapons and magical powers, plus additional loot that can be collected throughout the campaign is one that excites us immensely.

Also featured are three multiplayer modes revolving around a predominantly 5v5 dynamic. Incursion gets you to team up with your mates and a few minions to defend your base against other people and other minions, the idea being that you need to destroy your opponent's base. Devastation is a deathmatch with a whiff of *COD*'s Domination about it, requiring you to capture and hold objectives to score points. The most interesting (read: weird), however, is Meltdown. In charge of a squad of minions, your task is to march them to the centre of the map and get them to throw themselves into an incinerator. It sounds a bit like *Lemmings*. In 2015.

Still, weird or not, multiplayer appears to be key to *Battleborn*, whether competitively or cooperatively, and we're excited to see what Gearbox has done with it. Whatever happens, we know that there is an upgrade system that enables you to level up each individual character to a max rank of 10, as well as a personal 'Command Rank', that works in the same way as other shooters, conferring different titles, badges and unlocks to use on the battlefield.

According to 2K, one of *Battleborn*'s key RPG-style features is an "accelerated growth system" called the Helix System that will allow you to



"EVEN MORE ENCOURAGING IS THE PROMISE OF COOPERATIVE PLAY, A HALLMARK OF THE BORDERLANDS GAMES"



△○×□ We're really digging the game's art style – it's like an evolution of the beautiful cel shading used in the *Borderlands* games.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ A huge roster of 25 playable heroes, each with their own unique weapons.
- □ An extensive story-driven campaign that can be played on your own or with a mate.
- ✕ Small-scale competitive multiplayer split across three distinct modes.
- ○ Upgrade systems that apply to both you and the characters that you choose to use.

experience a single character's entire skill tree in a single story mission or multiplayer clash, which sounds nuts, frankly, but whatever. We gave up trying to second guess Gearbox years ago, and to be fair this doesn't sound like the worst idea – some people really get off on grinding, but a lot of you will want to get into the nitty gritty nice and quickly, and this will allow you to do so.

In the process of writing this preview we've become more interested in *Battleborn*, despite our best efforts to remain cynical. If Gearbox can bring the irreverent tone and style of *Borderlands*, coupled with its excellent approach to gameplay, to the sort of serious multiplayer experience that 2K has recently bandied around in the form of *Evolve* then we might have something really cool on our hands. Just please stop calling it a 'hero shooter'...

Steve Holmes

BATTLEBORN is busy pretending it's not a MOBA by shooting at stuff in Gearbox Software's back garden. For more info check out **www.battleborn.com**



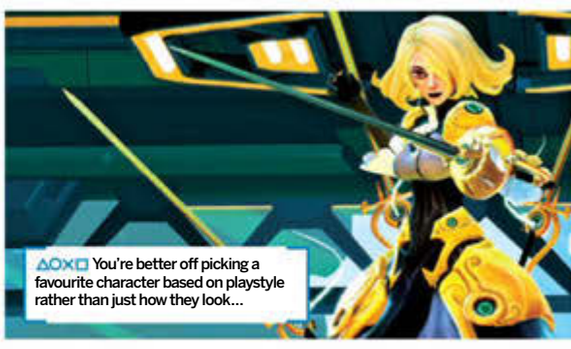
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KILL YOUR DARLINGS

Borderlands gets teabagged

A fantastic single-player/co-op campaign proved enough for *Borderlands*, but its tight FPS combat could've worked just as nicely in a competitive multiplayer setting. Thankfully, *Battleborn* offers just that, and so when it lands, you and your pals need to be sharing your experiences – with so many characters to pick from, there's plenty of multiplayer havoc to be had here.



△○×□ You're better off picking a favourite character based on playstyle rather than just how they look...

ETA 29 SEPTEMBER | **PUB** WARNER BROS | **DEV** TT GAMES | **TWITTER** @LEGODIMENSIONS

Lego Dimensions

There's no point in resisting

PS4

ALSO COMING TO PS3

TT GAMES HAS only gone and ruined our year. We are struggling to imagine what would be worse: the knowledge that a videogame will soon be made available that combines all of our favourite childhood things, or the realisation that we simply won't be able to afford it. The former infers we need to step back from adult life and regress into a state of playhouse bliss, spending our evenings in the company of tiny plastic bricks, while the latter, on the other hand, ensures we will struggle to pay our rent this September if we choose to indulge. Basically, it's time to sacrifice your time, money and shelf space at the altar of Lego.

You see, the inevitable has finally happened. Lego has decided it isn't content with dominating the toy market *and* having a successful series of videogames – it wants to bridge the gap between the two worlds. *Lego Dimensions* is taking on the 'toys-to-life' market with a direct assault on the throne *Skylanders* sits on and *Disney Infinity* has been vying after for some time now.

If you've ever dedicated a serious amount of time to creating wildly expansive – not to mention ludicrous – 'What If?' scenarios in your head, you'll understand how potent this combination could be. Who would win in a race between Marty McFly in his DeLorean and Gandalf behind the wheel of the Batmobile? Would the Justice League be able to sink the One Ring into the fiery pits of Mount Doom faster than the Fellowship? What happens to the space-time continuum when you hand The Doctor a Portal gun? These are questions that *Lego Dimensions* will not only answer, but let us play out to our heart's content – for a price, that is.

A sad fact of life is that harnessing plastic witchcraft costs quite a bit of bank. If you want to be able to pick some pretty cool-looking mini-figurines off of your shelf this autumn, place them on the special Gateway and see them spring to life as playable characters in a game, then it'll come at a high price. The *Lego Dimensions* starter pack – which contains Gandalf, Batman and Wyldstyle, plus the Batmobile, base game and NFC portal – will run you just shy of £100. Level Packs – containing one character, two vehicles, one game level – cost around £30, while a character and vehicle bundled together will chip away at your bank balance at £14.99 a pop.

It's essentially some of the most expensive DLC ever conceived, the price inflated because, firstly, we are suckers for Lego, and secondly, because Lego has never been cheap. We sometimes wonder how the online task force that assembled to vilify Bethesda over its Horse Armor DLC a decade ago would respond to something like *Lego Dimensions*. Taking a browse over the pages of content that has already been announced, it wouldn't be particularly difficult to create a pre-order package more expensive than the console you already purchased to play the bloody game on. We should have restraint, you say? We don't know the meaning of the word! But, n'awww, come on, look how awesomely cute the Chell Lego mini-figurine is... right?

It's easy enough to get caught up in the price fiasco, and even easier to forget that *Lego Dimensions* has a very real chance of being a genuine step forward for the 'toys-to-life' genre. *Skylanders* started strong but never recaptured its early form, while *Disney Infinity* always seemed to struggle to find its place. *Lego Dimensions* has TT Games behind it, and if you've played any sort of *Lego* game over the past generation, you should know what that means – fun gameplay for all ages, solid humour and a rare co-op treat.

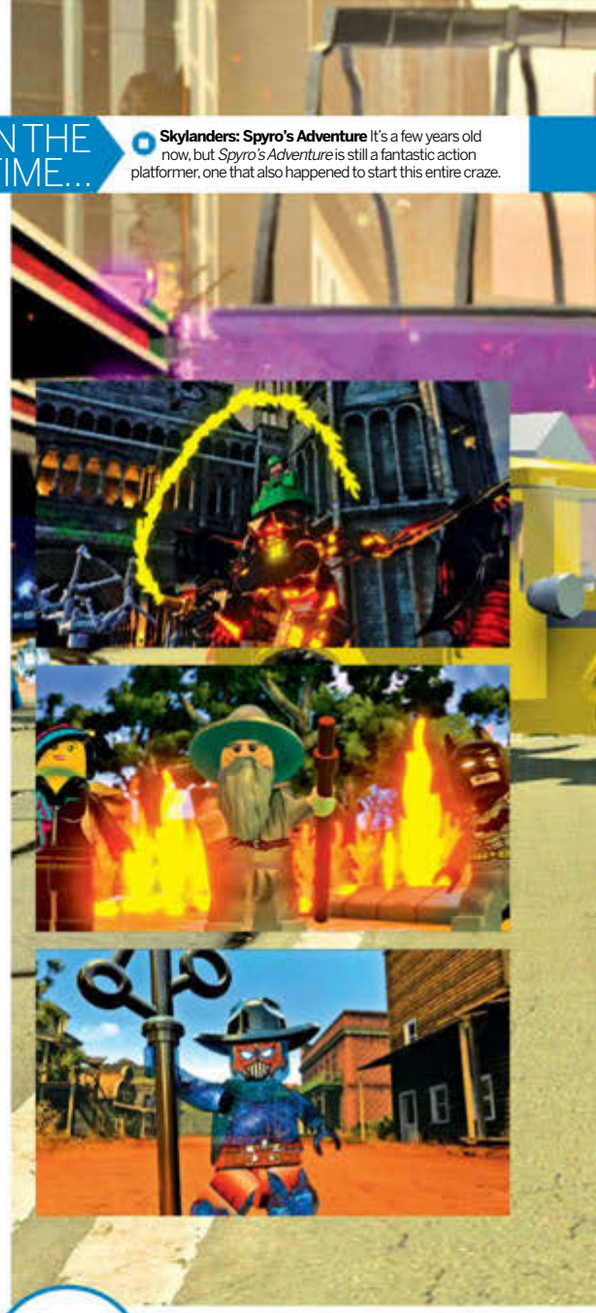
The fantastic figurines might be the initial draw, but *Lego Dimensions* has the potential to be so much more than its competition. Honestly, we're surprised it took Lego so long to get involved. Following the success of *The Lego Movie*, not to mention the Ninjago and City toy lines, the company is enjoying a wave of immense success and popularity. But it's now as Lego fans get to play in both the real and virtual worlds, with the opportunity to cross the streams on some of their favourite franchises without restriction no less, that Lego could just find itself in a new position of power.

Josh West

LEGO DIMENSIONS is, of course, being developed by TT Games. Check the official website out for more deets: **www.lego.com/en-gb/dimensions**

IN THE MEANTIME...

Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure It's a few years old now, but *Spyro's Adventure* is still a fantastic action platformer, one that also happened to start this entire craze.





SHARE THIS

ULTIMATE MASH-UP

You won't want to miss these radical team-ups

***Dimensions* seems like the sort of game that's built for the fanboy and fangirl that lurks within every single one of us, and that's why your Share button is going to be worn out. Just imagine Legolas chilling with Superman, Wonder Woman kicking it in the Land Of Oz and Homer Simpson battling Batman.**

△○×□ If you want to get the full *Lego Dimensions* experience, it's going to cost you a lot. Basically, if your kids like *Skylanders*, don't tell them this exists.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ It features an original story with a villain creating chaos with the fabric of reality.
- □ It seems Lego has access to essentially any IP that it wants to play around with.
- ✕ TT Games is back behind the wheel, so we can genuinely expect a fun game.
- ○ You can mix and match all of the playsets that you can buy as you see fit.

"WOULD THE JUSTICE LEAGUE BE ABLE TO SINK THE ONE RING INTO THE FIERY PITS OF MOUNT DOOM FASTER THAN THE FELLOWSHIP?"



ETA TBA | **DEV** SEGA | **PUB** SEGA | **TWITTER** @SEGA

Yakuza Zero

Shenmue lives

PS4

ALSO COMING TO PS3

AS WE WERE writing this, yet another rumour mill started up about the development of *Shenmue 3*. Let's face it, though, that game being announced has less of a chance happening than Sega making an *Alien* game that features Big the Cat as the protagonist. What the *Shenmue* fans havent noticed, though, is that their beloved *Shenmue* lives on – spiritually, at least. And it's called *Yakuza*.

Yakuza Zero hits upon all the core tenets that made *Shenmue* great – it's an gangster story set in December 1988, where a couple of Yakuza upstarts plan to take over a fictionalised and more extreme version of Tokyo's 'red-light district', Kabukicho. Think of it as a prequel to the broader *Yakuza* series – this is the first installment to be set in the Eighties, and here you're paving the way for the events of the franchise. Hardcore fans of the series can expect to see a lot of foreshadowing and a lot of depth added to the established lore.

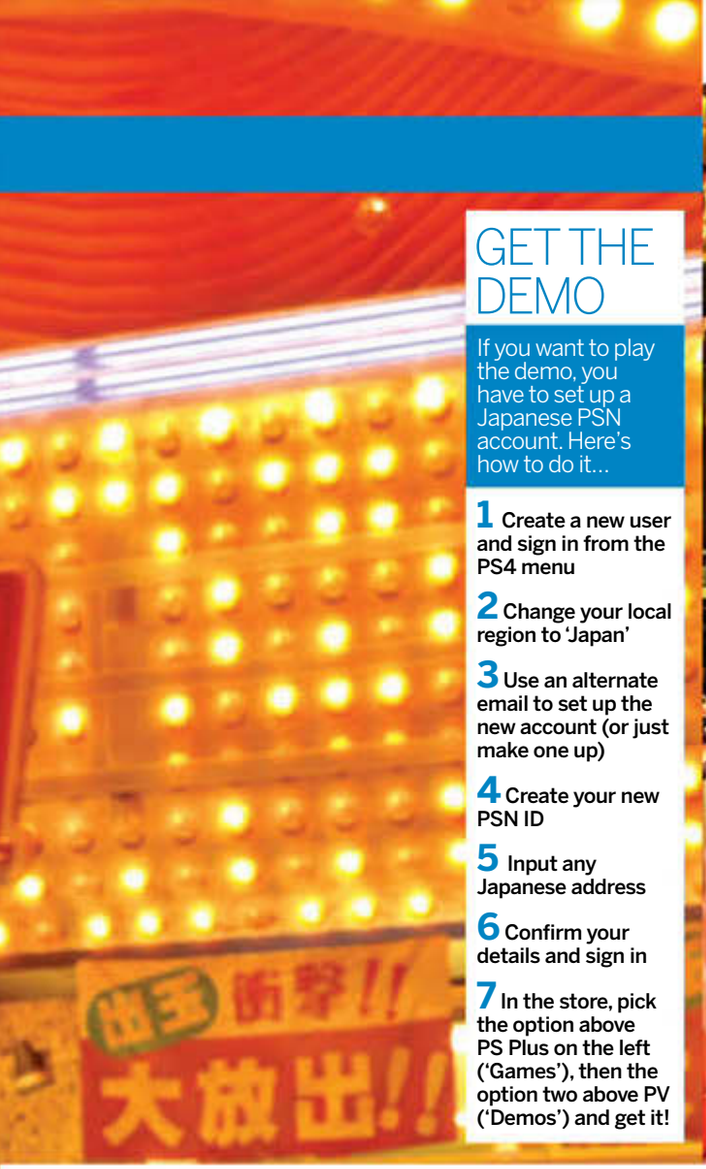
You play as Kazuma Kiryu (series fans might recognise that name) and his brother-in-arms Majima Goro. In the series' tradition, both of the mobsters are incredibly stylish – dapper, even – and the game sees them attempt to make their well-tailored way up the Yakuza chain of command. Japanese organised crime is a bit different to what you would see over here (or any European syndicates glorified in Western cinema) and operates on a honour-based system. It's your job to guide Kazuma and Majima through the ranks of the Yakuza and take over Kabukicho.

So, that being our mission, we wiled away the first hour or so of the demo available on Japanese PSN doing a little karaoke. Yes, you read that right: *Karaoke*. Like *Shenmue* – we can't stop making the comparison – you can spend your leisure time as you see fit. The world is semi-open, so if you fancy jumping into a bar in the evening to unwind and rocking out to a cheesy Japanese power ballad, go ahead. If you want to get in a drunken fist fight with one of the bar's patrons after said musical indulgence then go right ahead. Just expect it to have repercussions on your reputation, you lout.

If that's not your kind of thing, though, you can expect to go out and race RC cars, set up a real estate business, try and woo anonymous ladies on the phone or even play in a licensed Sega arcade. To make the variety of options even more appealing, you can rest assured that *everything* Kazuma Kiryu does, he does with aplomb – he's probably the most exaggerated character we've played as in this console generation so far, and that's a wonderful thing to experience.

The series has seen some mechanical improvements since its last Western outing – *Yakuza 4* – and, though small, these refinements help knit the experience together better than ever. There's a new fighting system that feels a bit like the *Arkham* games crossed over with a very pared-down version of *Tekken*. 'Heat' moves have been added, too (think Supers) and movement generally feels better when you're running around the snowy Japanese province.

The *Yakuza* series has been on an unfortunate and steady decline in terms of quality over the last decade (we can't comment on the fifth



GET THE DEMO

If you want to play the demo, you have to set up a Japanese PSN account. Here's how to do it...

1. Create a new user and sign in from the PS4 menu
2. Change your local region to 'Japan'
3. Use an alternate email to set up the new account (or just make one up)
4. Create your new PSN ID
5. Input any Japanese address
6. Confirm your details and sign in
7. In the store, pick the option above PS Plus on the left ('Games'), then the option two above PV ('Demos') and get it!



△○×□ This arcade is chock full of games and machines that can top up your income, should you need a quick cash boost.



△○×□ It might look like harmless fun, but karaoke is actually a good way of earning extra money – especially useful now that money replaces XP.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ You can go and sing ridiculous Eighties rock tracks in a karaoke bar.
- □ The combat system is satisfying and violent, fast and reminds us of *Tekken*.
- × It's already shaping up to be the best game in the entire series.
- ○ It's likely the closest thing you are going to get to *Shenmue 3*, ever.

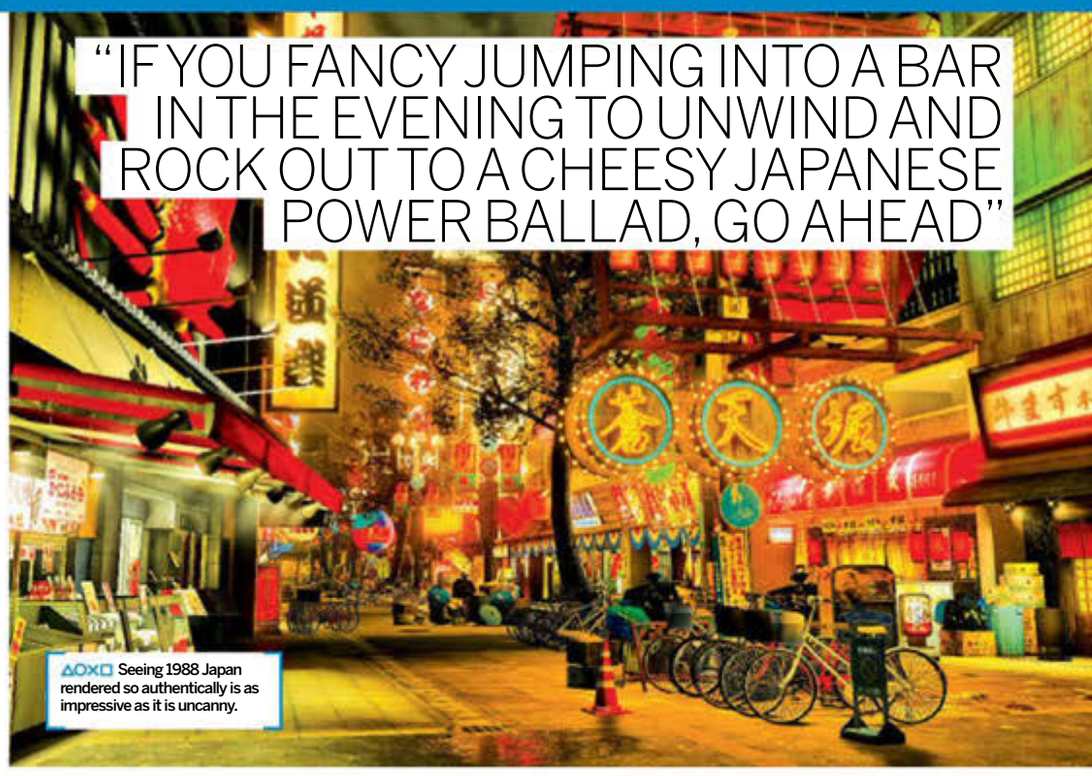
game – it's not been released over here... yet), but from our limited understanding of the Japanese demo, it's quite clear that Sega is reinvesting in the franchise. The facial models are better, which is quite important, considering you spend the majority of the hour-long demo staring right at them, and the attention to detail in the world could rival that of Sega's spiritual predecessor from back in the day. We still take issue with some of the animations, though.

Yakuza Zero is shaping up to be a great game – a quick blast on the demo alone will show you just how much of a step up this title is from the rest of the series. It looks like Sega is doubling down on the cheesy mobster-simulator this time around, and that's great news, because (let's be honest), it's not like we're actually going to see another *Shenmue* game any time soon, are we?

Dom Peppiatt

YAKUZA ZERO is being developed by Sega. There's no solid release date yet, but *Yakuza 5* is coming West before 2015 is out. More: **ryu-ga-gotoku.com/zero/**

"IF YOU FANCY JUMPING INTO A BAR IN THE EVENING TO UNWIND AND ROCK OUT TO A CHEESY JAPANESE POWER BALLAD, GO AHEAD"



△○×□ Seeing 1988 Japan rendered so authentically is as impressive as it is uncanny.

Instant Expert

ETA AUGUST 2015 | **PUB** EA SPORTS | **DEV** EA TIBURON

Madden NFL 16

PS4

MADDEN 101

American Football isn't as big as it is here in the US – mainly because it is not as good as proper football – so let us provide a primer for any of you who don't know much about the *Madden* series or the sport itself. American Football as we know it was invented by Yale graduate Walter Camp, who thought it was funny to call a sport in which you use your hands, 'football'. Madden is the US's equivalent of *FIFA*, doing huge numbers every year.

MVP

Since coming to PS4 with *Madden NFL 25*, the series has failed to produce that standout game that you feel couldn't have been done on PS3. Indeed, *Madden 15* doesn't even look that good from a technical perspective when you compare it to *FIFA 15*. The hope is that with a couple of years of experience on the PS4, the team behind *Madden NFL 16* can produce something special and finally give us a truly stellar PS4 *Madden* game.

NOOB FRIENDLY

If you've stayed away from *Madden* games over the last few years because of your lack of understanding about the sport, you don't need to anymore. Since *Madden* introduced GameFlow, it's been far easier for those not familiar with the sport to jump-in. The game will suggest a few plays for the situation you are in, rather than leaving you to your own devices. That not only makes it far more accessible, but it helps to up the pace of the game.

ULTIMATE TEAM

If you're a fan of *FIFA*'s card-based Ultimate Team mode, you'll be pleased to hear that it's also found its way into the *Madden* series. The concept is exactly the same – you get packs of player cards that you then use to put together a team. From there, you compete to earn more coins to buy better packs and gradually improve your team. You might even find you end up spending more time playing the market than you do playing games.

IRL

Just like with *FIFA* in the UK, it's been reported that professional players of the sport eagerly check their player's rating as soon as a new *Madden* game comes out. It's been claimed that the game's influence on pros is such that young NFL players better understand the tactical aspect of American Football as a result of playing *Madden* and that the growing popularity of spread offence in the NFL can be attributed to the *Madden* games.



BACK TO THE FUTURE



It's arguable, like most sports games that see a regular yearly release, that the *Madden* series might be able to progress and evolve by learning one or two things from its past, bringing certain elements back for *NFL 16*.



The series has cut back on customisation options in the past, such as the ability to create your own teams in the previous games. So it would be nice to see that return in the upcoming game so players can have a more tailored experience.



Madden could also do with improving its Superstar (read: 'Career' or 'Road To The Show') mode, which many fans believe has been decreasing in quality over recent years. In this mode, you take control of a single athlete and chart his career.



Finally, it would be quite cool to give us a bit more flexibility and control when it comes to celebrations. Taunting our friends is what multiplayer gaming is all about, after all – maybe one day we could create our own taunts for tailored online trolling.

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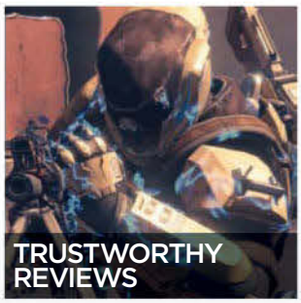
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PREVIEW

A quick look at some of the other awesome games that are just around the corner

1 DECEPTION IV: THE NIGHTMARE PRINCESS

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: 17 JULY

THE DECEPTION SERIES is a rather bizarre collection of strategy games based around luring your enemies into traps. Using rolling boulders, bathtubs, iron maidens, trains and a whole lot more, you've got to take out your pursuers before they get to you. The game has a score attack element in that you can combo your enemies into a variety of traps. It sounds a bit twisted on the surface, but there's an undeniable element of dark comedy in the carnage you end up creating in *Deception*. This game is going to have a niche audience, but we're sure there are a few of you out there who are delighted to see *Deception IV* getting an PS4 release.

2 KINGDOM HEARTS III

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q3 2016

SQUARE ENIX LIKES to make its fans wait, but now development on *Final Fantasy XV* is wrapping up, this means that Square Enix can finally shift its focus to *Kingdom Hearts III*. Since *Kingdom Hearts II's* release in 2005, we've had the HD version of the first two games to keep us going, but now we're ready for a new game. We don't think we'll be seeing the game this year, but when *XV* is out the way, we expect to start hearing a lot more about it. With *KH*'s combat system influencing *XV*, Square Enix will have had plenty of practice playing around with action RPG combat, so hopefully *Kingdom Hearts III* won't take too much longer.

3 MIGHTY NO. 9

FORMAT: PS4, PS3, VITA
RELEASE DATE: 18 SEPTEMBER

SINCE WE LAST talked about *Mighty No. 9* in the mag, the game has gone and got itself a publisher, Deep Silver, and has had its release date pushed back. It had been due to hit in April, but has now been pushed back to 18 September (the PS4 and PS3 version, that is; the Vita version will come later). With *Mega Man*'s creator Keiji Inafune on board, *Mighty No. 9* is obviously a *Mega Man* game in everything but name. As you blast your way through the game's 2D environments you'll gain the ability to transform into different shapes by defeating bosses. It's been a long time since we've had a *Mega Man* game, so we look forward to seeing if Inafune can still impress us with this spiritual successor.

4 H1Z1

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q4 2015

THERE'S ONE BENEFIT to not having early access on PS4 when it comes to *H1Z1*: we can let PC players worry about all the bugs and gameplay tweaks that need to be made, safe in the knowledge that, when all that's ironed out, we'll get a polished version of *H1Z1* on PS4. Indeed, as the months go by, the game's developers have been adding more and more content. That includes adding more zombies, citizen's arrests, Molotovs and, perhaps best of all, bees. Still, however much they add, you can't shake the impression that *H1Z1* is a rip-off of *DayZ*. It's going to be fascinating to see which wins the battle of the survival simulators when they both come to PS4.













ROUNDUP











5 HOLLOWPOINT

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q3 2015

THIS GAME WILL put you in control of a group of mercenaries being hired to battle in corporate wars. One of the coolest things about the 2D side-scroller is that it supports up to four-player online co-op. When it comes to how you work together, Ruffian Games has suggested that it's important to consider how you assemble your squad before going into battle. It seems that you can create characters with different abilities and equipment, and you must consider which of these is best suited for the mission you're about to undertake. *Hollowpoint* is going to have to compete with the likes of *Alienation* and *Helldivers* when it comes to online co-op shooters, so it better bring the goods.

6 YOOKA-LAYLEE

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q3 2016

IF YOU DON'T know what *Yooka-Laylee* is, the simplest way we can describe it to you is by saying that it is a spiritual successor to *Banjo-Kazooie*. Being developed by Playtonic Games, a team composed of some of the developers who worked on *Banjo*, *Yooka-Laylee* is being pitched as a revival of the 'buddy platformer'. It seems that there are plenty of people who are convinced by that pitch, too, because the game has smashed its goal on Kickstarter. This 3D platformer will require you to use the unique abilities of its two stars in concert to progress through its colourful world. The chameleon, Yooka, for example, can use its tongue as a grapple, while the bat, Laylee, is able to fly.

7 CYBERPUNK 2077

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: 2017

WE'VE BEEN EXCITED about *Cyberpunk 2077* since it was announced, because we're suckers for cyberpunk as a genre. Our anticipation has just been kicked up a notch, though. Why? Because *The Witcher 3* is brilliant. All CD Projekt Red needs to do is take the elements that make that game work so well and transport it into a new setting. Replace the monsters and swords with cybernetic modifications and hi-tech weaponry; give us a dense urban dystopia to explore; keep the dark tone and deliver a story that's open to player choice. Regardless, however CD Projekt Red approaches the game, we have got confidence that it can pull it off after seeing what it managed with *The Witcher 3*.

8 STEAMWORLD HEIST

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q4 2015

WITH ITS FOCUS on turn-based combat, *SteamWorld Heist* is looking a little like a 2D *XCOM* and, in our book, that's no bad thing. Just like *XCOM*, your team will be composed of individuals with different abilities that you'll need to leverage in the right way to be successful. The similarities continue in that it looks as if there will be some kind of resource management aspect to *Heist* outside of the combat scenarios, tying into the fiction of you controlling a gang of robots in space. *Heist* is completely different to its *SteamWorld* predecessor, *Dig*, but this is looking far more interesting to us than a straight-up sequel.

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HOT TOPIC
SEASON PASSES

LUKE ALBIGÉS
EDITOR, PLAY



"MORE CONTENT FOR LESS? GO ON THEN..."

JUST AS WITH anything else in life, not getting ripped off is a simple case of knowing what you're buying. Would you pay up front for a week's worth of meals from a restaurant you'd never tried before? Of course not. It's a bit different with a supplier you trust – I'd happily throw money at an *Uncharted 4* season pass if Sony announced one, because Naughty Dog hasn't made a bad game since *Jak X* – but even then, it's always going to be something of a gamble. But as I said, the solution couldn't be simpler. If in doubt, just wait.

Unlike pre-order incentives (which I would find somewhat harder to defend), season passes typically offer the same kind of discount on a bunch of content once everything is available as they do when announced. There's no need to jump right in at the start unless you're desperate to get involved with the new content but even then, the Twitch generation has you covered – you can easily check out the streams and impressions of those who are a little more reckless with their wallets before reaching for your own.

In concept, then, I'm absolutely fine with the idea of season passes. For something like *Borderlands 2*, where I was inevitably going to rinse every last drop of enjoyment I could from the game, I was in day one. And as luck would have it, the quartet of add-ons that made up the pass offered some of the best post-release content I've ever seen. There are few series or developers I trust enough to take that plunge, it must be said, and as much as I've been enjoying *Mortal Kombat X*, the season pass just seems a bit steep for me to justify right now. If, in a few months, I've enjoyed what I've seen of the four new fighters, maybe I'll bite. Maybe I'll just grab one or two of the new fighters (as *if* I'm not buying Predator). We'll see. There's literally no reason to rush into this, or any other purchase.







FPS fans undeniably get the best deals when it comes to season passes. With regular content drops that eventually double the amount of content available, a higher price point can be justified. Every new map and mode is going to get rinsed for *months*, meaning you're ultimately looking at paying peanuts for every hour of enjoyment you get from the game. Hell, even *Destiny* can make similar boasts about long-term value – as much as I love it, even I couldn't spin *The Dark Below* as a decent amount of content for the price, that didn't stop me adding a few hundred more hours across three characters. Appearances can be deceptive when it comes to add-on content, so don't write an expansion off before you really consider what any extra maps and modes may offer in terms of extended gameplay.

I get the distrust for season passes in general, and I'm not going to sit here and claim that dropping an extra £20 at launch on a couple of hours of new stuff is a good idea. It isn't, obviously. Some genres suit the format better than others. I can't imagine shelling out for a pass for a solo game unless I heard great things about the additional content but multiplayer games? Price it right, let me know what I'm getting (and what I'm not) and you've probably got yourself a sale.



△○×□ *COD* addicts will likely find season passes work out to be just pennies per hour of play.



DARRAN JONES
EDITOR, RETRO GAMER

"ALL TOO OFTEN, IT'S JUST A CASH GRAB"

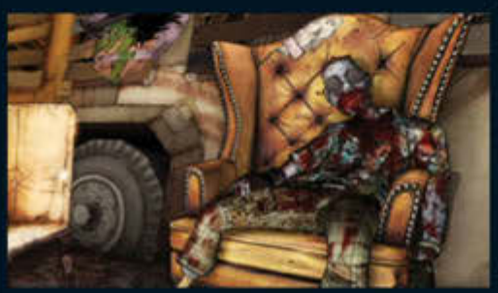
I'VE GOT A reputation for being rather cynical and miserable in the office. But it's not my fault – it's videogames that have made me this way. Once upon a time I was as wide-eyed as the rest of you, amazed by the games industry and astounded by every new game that came out. Of course, back then *Space Invaders* was cutting edge and *Pac-Man* still didn't have a wife, but they were good times, simpler times.

As time wore on, I too began to get tired, mainly because I could see that the hobby I loved was becoming a global business and as the businessmen moved in, things started to get a little, well... shit. This happened over a long space of time, but it still happened and it's led to what we have today: a miserable situation that causes visionaries to move to Kickstarter because publishers are too afraid to take risks.

They're not afraid to take your money, however, and the season pass is one of the worst examples of this. Now, before we go on I'd like to state that for the record I don't think all season passes are a bad idea, far from it. But many are, though. The problem is that most people in charge of big companies are businessmen, not gamers and while they might have a great head for business, they're also idiots. The season pass in its current state exists due to two main reasons: 1) EA decided it had a right to take money from the second hand market and 2) *Call Of Duty*. *Call Of Duty* proved that season passes were a viable option and a good way of getting gamers to pay for the same game twice. Of course, if you're a fan of the franchise then they offer fantastic value for money as you'll play the game religiously until the next one comes out.

△○×□ Season passes that actually offer decent value for money are few and far between, argues Darran.









The mistake companies made, however, was thinking that every game could slot into this template and sadly, most games can't, particularly those that don't focus on online play. Warner Bros in particular has hit the headlines lately due to the obscene price of its *Batman* season pass. £33 when I can buy the game for practically the same price? Sod off, Warner, and don't be greedy. Now it could be that it's going to be great content, but I bet that along with the reluctantly revealed extra story modes, they'll be a load of throwaway jib-jobs that won't add any value to the game whatsoever. Ooh, Batman has a new suit? Oh sod off and give us something of substance.

It's also worth nothing that some season passes don't even contain all the extra content that comes out, meaning you'll be paying even more cash. We've seen others that don't really give you a decent discount, meaning you may as well buy the stuff as it comes out, providing it does all come out. When season passes are done correctly they can build excitement for an old game, but too many of them feel like cynical cash grabs, with the publisher often expecting you to order upfront on blind trust. Well this guy's eyes are open and it's going to take a lot more than a render of Batgirl and some hazy information about 'story elements' to make me throw away £33 on a whim for *Arkham Knight*'s season pass. I suggest you wait, you can make a better judgement about whether it's worth your cash. Who am I kidding? You've also pre-ordered it, haven't you?

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VR VERDICT

Are we on the frontier of a revolution that will change gaming, or is VR just another gimmick? We speak to nDreams' Patrick O'Luanaigh to find out



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△○×□ Imagine how terrifying a shark attack would be if you have the experience beamed directly into your eyeballs.

There's something undeniably seductive at the heart of VR and Project Morpheus, that was originally implanted in our minds by films like *eXistenZ*, and *The Matrix*. That is the idea that we could step into an artificial reality and experience it as if we were really there. In fact, better than that, the idea that we could choose from a host of artificial realties, visit places both real and abstract, do things that we could never do in our day-to-day lives, pretend we are someone else for a moment in a far more immediate way than we can when we are sat on a sofa staring at a TV screen.

Of course, fantasy does not always match reality, a point proved starkly by VR's abject failure in the early-to-mid Nineties. The cynic in us says that things will be no different this time around and that VR headsets will again find themselves banished to the realm of failed gimmicks along with 3D TVs, motion control and other such technological detritus. Yet, there are positive signs that give us hope that VR really could work this time around. Most importantly, it's blatantly obvious that technology is in a far better place to deal with the challenges presented by virtual reality than it was in the past. Could that mean that we will come close to fulfilling the VR dream the second time around? Patrick O'Luanaigh of nDreams, the studio behind PS4 Morpheus title *The Assembly*, believes that we will, arguing that there's something fundamental to what VR can do that ensures it will be more than just a gimmick.

"I think, largely, you can have the same experience with a 3D film as you do with a 2D film – the technology doesn't really further anything or change anything," O'Luanaigh tells us. "With VR, the difference is *huge*. When you use VR, you don't go, 'oh yeah, this game's a little better for being in VR', you go '*holy shit*, this is new, I've never seen this before in my life!'" he continues. "I don't think I've ever seen anyone come away from a 3D television saying 'this will change *everything*', you know? I don't think VR is a gimmick, I really don't."

"Because we worked closely with Sony, we got a very early look at the Morpheus," O'Luanaigh says. "I just flipped about VR when I saw those [headsets]. I fell in love with them. The kind of games we really like to make as a team have got stories and take you into other worlds, and VR is *brilliant* for that," explains O'Luanaigh. "That is when we decided to focus the company on VR. We knew it wasn't destined to be a gimmick and we knew it wasn't just going to be a [fad]."

Indeed, we have had a chance to get hands-on with a number of VR headsets, including Project Morpheus and, like O'Luanaigh, we've been impressed with what we've seen and we're excited by the possibilities. Naturally, the proof is going to be in the games that we get to play with Morpheus, but the technology is impressive and clearly works, so the base is there.

△○×□ Morpheus certainly looks slick but we couldn't help wonder why headphones weren't integrated into its overall design.

We've also been heartened by the lack of discernable difference between the PS4's Project Morpheus and the now Facebook-owned Oculus Rift. Our initial concern was that Morpheus would be a tin-pot budget version of what PC owners would be getting with the Rift. That's not the case. Sony has made significant improvements to its initial prototype that mean it is now comparable to any other VR headset out there. Sure, there'll be things that you will be able to do with a £5000 PC that you can't with PS4, but that's irrelevant to most of us. In fact, O'Luanaigh thinks that Morpheus and PS4 might actually have an advantage.

"Every PS4 is the same," says O'Luanaigh. "You know that every single person wanting to try VR will be able to get a headset, plug it in and be off. That's a big advantage actually, and I think it may mean Morpheus sells faster when it launches than the Oculus or the Vive because I suspect those headsets will need powerful PCs," he explains. "People *will* spend quite a lot of money getting the right PCs and the hardware up-front eventually, and the average PC will come down in price in the long run, but right away? You're going to need a beefy PC and be a gamer that enjoys running a top-end gaming computer to take use it, whereas the Morpheus is something everybody can use."

Surely its not just about price, though? If Morpheus is going to be a success, it has to have great games and it has to be clear to us how VR can enhance our experience of playing those games. So, we have to ask how, exactly, will it do that?

"Having played things like *Alien: Isolation* in VR... I ripped the headset off in fear; I'm ashamed to admit," O'Luanaigh reveals. "But in there, you believe that alien is going to get you and you panic. I love that – how VR can act as an emotional amplifier."

"Horror's the lowest hanging fruit, because it's the easiest to show off, but I think actually, it's excitement and mystery and sadness and all that sort of stuff that will be more powerful, because you feel like you're there," continues O'Luanaigh. "When Valve did its original VR demo, they did this thing where you stood there, on a plank of wood over a massive chasm – like the Death Star – and you're looking down... and the game tells you to step to the left. 'Well... no' you say. But the headset's like 'you know you're in a room, you know you're on a carpet, you know this is safe. Step off.' I know that, but it's just too real and I can't jump," says O'Luanaigh. "It's lovely – your brain is telling you that you've got a headset on, but, somehow, you believe that you might fall."

It is VR's ability to trick our brain into experiencing something virtual as something so visceral really makes Project Morpheus sound exciting, but does that means that VR is limited to 'enhancing' first-person eperiences? That's not the case, according to O'Luanaigh.

"Some of the best experiences we've been playing with are actually 'diorama games' – if you imagine a big diorama, like the things you'd see in a museum, or even *Warhammer* – those kind of things work *fantastically* well in VR," says O'Luanaigh. "You can move your head in, look closely at your units, pick people up... that feeling of seeing something so small and moving people around from



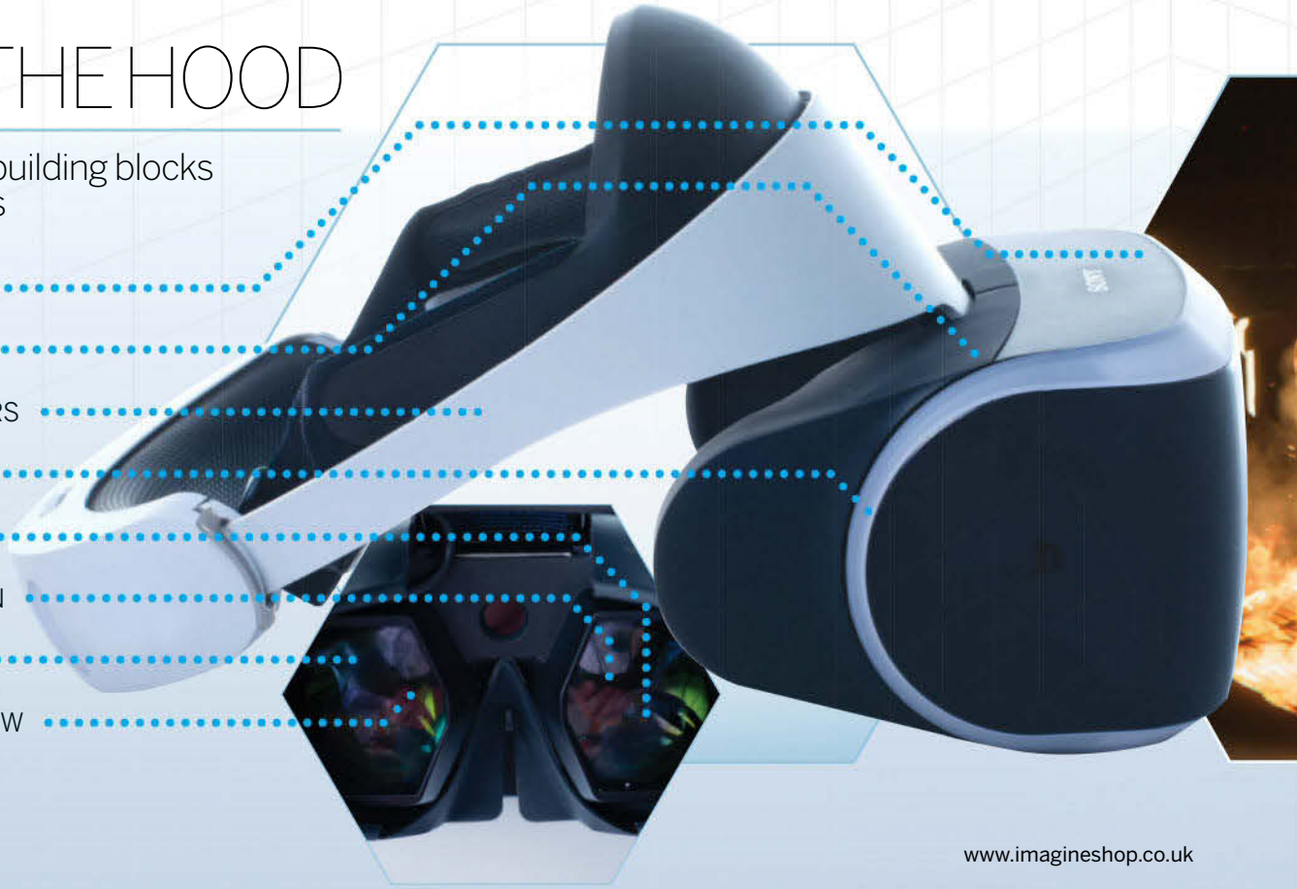


△○×□ Don't worry, you won't be controlling your games with this tiny remote. This is specifically for Morpheus customisation.

"SONY HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS TO ITS INITIAL PROTOTYPE"

UNDER THE HOOD

Breaking down the building blocks of Project Morpheus

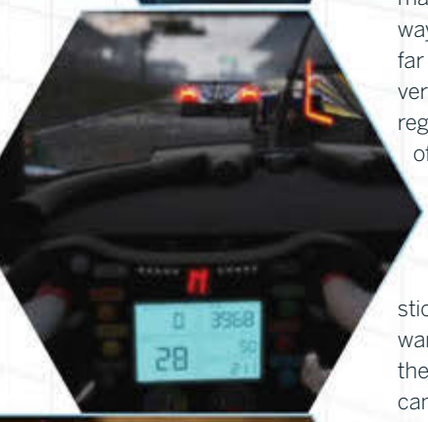


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God's view is incredible. Imagine RTS or tower defence games in this kind of diorama!"

However, we suspect some of the most interesting VR games will be the ones that do things in a way that we've not yet anticipated, that leverage the technology in order to do things that can *only* be done in VR.

"That's what is exciting for us," says O'Luanaigh. "We're not copying existing games or saying 'we'll port X game over to VR'. You can't just get rid of the cut-scenes and change the GUI a bit – I mean, some [developers] will do that, for sure, but it's what you can do in VR that's different that excites me. We're learning that right now," O'Luanaigh continues, "the kind of things that just can't be done elsewhere, and that's exciting."

That game developers will find a way to make VR uniquely compelling in such a way that the technology really takes off is far from a forgone conclusion, however. VR very much remains an open book in that regard, but, as O'Luanaigh suggests, it's out of that unknown element and the need for experimentation that there's, in fact, potential for some incredibly interesting things to emerge and grow.

"We're experimenting with things like sticking your head through a wall – you don't want the player to be made to stop moving their head because that feels quite weird and can cause simulator sickness," O'Luanaigh explains, "but then you don't really want players sticking their heads through the wall or ceiling, so what's the answer there?"

"If your character's got glasses, how does that feel in VR?," O'Luanaigh asks. "What about if you've got a tall character, a short character, how does it feel playing a female or a male? We have been looking into some really crazy things, some that we've found out were never meant to be tested," he explains to us, laughing, "and some that have been really fun."

The point here, then, is that it's hard to say anything definitive about VR. There's still so much for developers to learn, so many unknowns as to how it will develop and how consumers will respond.

"Nobody knows what's going to be the biggest selling game in VR, nobody knows what the best mechanics are going to be," explains O'Luanaigh. "There's such a huge, wide open territory here, you know? So many genres for people to tackle, so many games and things you can do."

If there's one thing we can say for sure about VR, it is that it has never been in a better position to be successful. The technology is such that we know that it *can* work. Whether it actually does depends on a number of factors. First of all, the price will have to be right. If Project Morpheus is too expensive, then people simply won't buy it. That will put developers off supporting it and that lack of support will, in turn, make consumers further reluctant to invest in the technology, and so the circle will continue until support is dropped entirely. Sony *must* get Morpheus' price perfect for consumers and it has to ensure that developers are there to support it.

Then there is the other key piece of the puzzle. The games *have* to be good. Without good games to support it, nothing else matters. More than that, the games have to offer us experiences that are unique to VR. Naturally, we're not against using Morpheus as a way to 'enhance' games that could be played without VR too, but if that's all it ends up doing, then there's no faster way to ensuring that Morpheus and VR is written off as a gimmick. Give us games that create an experience that we have never had before, games that make VR feel essential.

Despite all the challenges and potential pitfalls VR faces, we all want to believe that our virtual fantasy of a VR future will become a reality. It's the possibility that Project Morpheus just might come close to achieving this that really excites us about the technology, and that makes us hope that it will be a success when it finally hits PS4 in the first half of 2016.

VIRTUAL VANGUARD

The games that will be leading the charge when Project Morpheus hits PS4



THE ASSEMBLY

WHAT IS IT?

A adventure game that takes place in a underground facility where scientists and academics search for a theory of everything.

WHY VR?

Giving you the sense that you are actually inhabiting a place is one of the obvious strengths of VR. For that reason, an adventure game set in a mysterious facility sounds like a great use of the technology.



EVE: VALKYRIE

WHAT IS IT?

A multiplayer space dogfighter from the developers behind *EVE Online* and set in the same universe similar to *Dust 514*.

WHY VR?

We love this as a VR concept because sitting in a cockpit with a spaceship's controls in front of you is about as close as you can get to your real-life situation of sitting down with a controller in your hand.



PROJECT CARS

WHAT IS IT?

An uncannily realistic and in-depth racing simulator that is set to add VR support when Morpheus releases on the PS4.

WHY VR?

When it comes to realism, Morpheus will allow you to go that extra step. Imagine playing *Project Cars* with a full racing wheel and pedal setup and Morpheus upon your brow...



THE LONDON HEIST

WHAT IS IT?

A first-person shooter that is made specifically to show off Morpheus that could develop into a full game.

WHY VR?

The game shows off how motion control can be used with VR, with Move controllers used to control each hand. An interesting prospect, but we're yet to be convinced a first-person shooter is the best option for that combo.

UNSUNG HEROES

SOUND DESIGN

We go behind the scenes to speak with those at the forefront of what might just be videogames' most underappreciated craft



Try to imagine playing through the entirety of your favourite game with the sound turned off. Imagine *Dead Space* without hearing a menacing clank in a dark corner cutting through the silence, *Battlefield* multiplayer without the chaos of gunfire and explosions, *BioShock* without the haunting deep wail of a Big Daddy. As soon as you start thinking like that, the vital importance of sound design comes sharply into focus.

Given how fundamental it is to both the emotional experience and mechanics of our favourite games, it's arguable that sound design doesn't receive the attention it deserves when it comes to evaluating what makes the games we love so great. In speaking to four members of the team behind *Battlefield*'s exceptional audio – Ben Minto, Andreas Almström, Bence Pajor and Olof Strömqvist – the man responsible for the sound of *Transistor* and *Bastion*, Darren Korb and executive audio director on *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided*, Steve Szczepkowski, we discovered that there may just be a very good reason for that.

"In my opinion, when sound design is good, you *don't* notice it," Korb tells us. "If the sound design of a game calls too much attention to itself, even if it is cool, it can be distracting and break the player's immersion. When sound design really works, it helps make the game feel great without the player noticing it!"

"It's meant to be an invisible layer that works on many levels," Szczepkowski says, echoing Korb's sentiments. "It's the glue that fills in all the gaps as well as being the emotional compass. Occasionally audio gets to jump into the spotlight for some moments and shine, but it shouldn't be the headline.

"Good sound design should always strive to support the game's needs and never stand as a solo force," he continues. "Ultimately, when to pull back on your design is just as important as knowing when to push the creative."

For Szczepkowski, ensuring that audio is not 'a solo force' is something that starts at the beginning of a project. "I try to absorb as much information as possible," Szczepkowski tells us. "Story is fundamental to any *Deus Ex* game so understanding the key narrative beats guides us in finding the emotional mood. From there, we jump to creative inspiration; themes in the visual beats including concept art, level design, character design (and much more) to push me to find a centre."

Korb takes a similar approach and offers some examples of how the themes, style and even mechanics of the games he's worked on influenced his approach to sound design. He points to the physical sounds – hammering, sawing and chopping – that you get in *Bastion*, a game about creation and destruction, through to the way in which the fact that *Transistor*'s protagonist is



"[AUDIO] IS THE GLUE THAT FILLS IN ALL THE GAPS, AS WELL AS BEING AN EMOTIONAL COMPASS"



PRO PICKS



ANDREAS ALMSTRÖM

lead sound designer at DICE

I would say that *The Last Of Us* sounds really good, it is just beautifully crafted. *GTA V* sounds beautiful for the sheer scope of it. I'd say, for those reasons, those games are my top two.



BEN MINTO

audio director at DICE

I liked *Valiant Hearts* that came out last year. I think it does something beautiful. I liked *Shadow Of Mordor* as well, because there the sound design worked with everything that it was doing.



DARREN KORB

audio director at Supergiant

***Papers, Please* is one of my favorite games. That's a game where everything contributes to the tone, including the sound design. It's oppressive, intense, minimal, and really tasteful.**

a singer is incorporated in the game's audio. "I definitely wanted to integrate Red's singing throughout the game," Korb says. "My first idea to express that was the state change that occurs when you enter Turn mode [a turn-based combat mode that freezes enemies while you plan your moves]. The music becomes filtered, and a previously silent vocal track can only be heard in this state. The idea was to bring the player inside Red's head in this more thoughtful, tactical game state. It seemed like a logical place to go since being a singer is a part of who she is."

You might think that process of finding a game's 'sound' in a game not set in our world, such as with the future-set *Deus Ex*, or the fantastical *Bastion*, doesn't necessarily apply to titles with a more realistic feel like the *Battlefield* series, but the *Battlefield* audio team tells us that's not the case.

"For each project we almost have a Rosetta Stone as a team, so that we can gather around and understand what the game will sound like and we try and find that right at the outset of the project," Minto explains. "It could be a clip from YouTube, a film that's released or something along those lines and it helps us all get into the same feeling for how that title should sound."

"There was a shift from *Battlefield 2* to *Bad Company*," Strömqvist says, providing an example. "*Bad Company* had a more handicam, punky sort of sound aesthetic which was quite different to *Battlefield 2*. *Bad Company 2* was a step towards more the handicam sound of *Bad Company* and a little bit more of cinematic feel to it and *Battlefield 3* went more towards a documentary style."

With *Battlefield 3* and *Battlefield 4* moving towards a more grounded representation of war, in contrast to the ostentatious *Bad Company* games, the audio design has necessarily evolved along the way, but it's fascinating to discover that people's changing perception of war over the years has also influenced how the team has approached the *Battlefield* games.

"If we were making these games in the Eighties, you'd have things like *Rambo* and *Predator* as the aesthetic of

what war sound likes, but these modern ones, because we've unfortunately been at war at the time, what people's understanding of what war sounds like is probably determined by the footage we see on the news and the footage that people share on YouTube," says Minto. "The quality of devices recording these events – we've seen it go from bulky cameras all the way to iPhone footage now – that transition has changed the way that people perceive war, but also of what war sounds like because of how this gear that's made for listening to dialogue, how it reacts to loads of sounds pummeling you."

"Also, it's about getting exposed to what war actually sounds like," says Almström, chiming in. "Hollywood has always been a like a trimmed version, then when you hear real war, it sounds very different. You're very surprised by the types of sounds you hear in real war – that's one of the Rosetta Stones for *Battlefield 3* and *Battlefield 4*."

"There's been a history of erasing lively recordings that might not be scientifically perfect, steady loop of a car engine or something like that," says Strömqvist as an example. Strömqvist has no qualms, however, about using "a recording that captures a more lifelike representation of an engine which might not be perfect, or as steady, or scientific, but it has some life, something else in it. I think we've had a good history of embracing those artifacts of recordings," he says.

"Those things actually capture little bits of story and real life into it," Minto suggests. "When we play those back in the game, we get all those little fragments of extra story for free, so when the player hears it all concocted back together and there's an even more complex story."

It all ties back to that desire to consider a game's sound as a whole, to make sure that everything works together as a totality, rather than fussing over each individual element, which, as Minto points out, can actually detract from what you are trying to achieve.

"If you ever look at a picture like the *Mona Lisa*, your eyes are drawn to her eyes and her smile and the amount of love and detail that's there, but in the background, there's a little smudgy bridge just above her right shoulder. If you look at that bridge in that detail, it doesn't compare to that smile," Minto continues. "The good part of sound design is to realise to not to make the most awesome bridge in the world, because that would detract from the main prize. It's all about everything sitting together and if you made everything awesome, you end up with nothing being awesome, because it's all fighting over the top of each other. That's a thing I've noticed about working here in Sweden is that there's not this driving pride to make everything louder and bigger and brighter, because you

"BAD COMPANY HAD A MORE HANDICAM, PUNKY SORT OF SOUND AESTHETIC WHICH WAS DIFFERENT TO BATTLEFIELD 2"

In striving for that sound, the *Battlefield* team captures everything for real – "tanks, airplanes, all the weapons we can think of, explosions, everything," says Pajor. That commitment to grabbing authentic material to work with might lead you to think that the team always takes a very scientific and regimented approach to their work, but, on the contrary, they like to embrace the rough and ready when it is in service of the sound of the game as a whole.

"One of the things that I think we've had as a concept is that we don't care too much about the individual elements, we're constantly looking at the entire soundscape, the entire experience and we're not too precious about certain elements," Pajor explains. "They have to be crafted and they have to be very good, but it's not the elements themselves, it's how they interact with each other, that's what makes it good and that has to fit."











SPLICE & DICE



BABY ALLIGATORS

Medal Of Honor's silencer contains a baby alligator noise, because in DICE's Ben Minto's words, "they make a great squeak."



GUITAR JACK

Remember the death sound in *Bad Company 2*? That's a result of DICE's Stefan Strandberg pulling a jack out of a guitar amplifier.



ELEPHANT SEAL

You might remember a metal tower collapsing in one of *Battlefield 4*'s trailers, but you probably don't know there's an elephant seal in there.



HYENAS

The animal noises continue! Rockets that appeared in one of the *Battlefield* trailers had the call of hyenas mixed in.









just run out of space. Sometimes you just have to make things not as polished as they would be as if you were looking at it is an individual item, because you are making sure to keep your eye on what the overall big picture is."

Another key to the way that the team works is in how integrated it is with other departments. Just as Korb and Szczepkowski talked about taking influence from the game's themes, story, art style and so on, at the beginning of a project, the *Battlefield* team emphasises the importance of staying engaged with those other elements throughout. The potential to work closely as part of a team is a real advantage for videogame sound design.

"In film, the sound is usually post-production – it's put on afterwards. The beauty of the way we work – especially with the *Frostbite* engine – is that we're not bolted on," Minto explains. "A lot of studios might use a graphics engine where you then bolt-on some audio middleware and they're just feeding off it. But we're right in there, usually from the start of the project as well, going, 'well, if you make this vista open up and then close like that, we have the opportunity with sound to do X, Y and Z.' Or, 'if we know round the next corner you want the player to feel threatened or scared, if we do this a couple of steps back, we can build the player up to that experience.' We're not just sound attachers, we don't just put sounds on things. We're interested in the experience and building up to it."

"I would say we're completely integrated with the rest of team," Almström points out. "We work as an artist, or a gameplay person – we're that integrated into the processes."

"I would say even more," Pajor suggests, "we're integrated into every part of the game. We see it from the outside, the whole picture, and we intervene everywhere. We can talk to an animator and say 'this would be better if you did it like this or that' and we are talking to the designers saying, 'if we did it like this, we could make the sound for it tell this story or that story.' I would say we influence game design a lot."

The team's insistence on the importance of working together with

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other departments and supporting each other in order to work towards realising a complete experience makes sense when you consider how audio permeates every aspect of a game. When it comes to the story, audio can help set and enhance the tone. For the world, audio is key in creating atmosphere and helping you to buy into the game's setting. Lest we forget that games are interactive, it also plays a vital role when it comes to mechanics.

"Having feedback for player actions is often essential not just for feel, but to give the player cues about mechanics," says Korb. "Did the attack connect? Is a power ready to use again? Am I at low health? Audio can help convey these things without getting in the way."

"What we're trying to do with the soundscape is, as well as making you believe you're there, we're encoding information," Minto says in reference to *Battlefield*'s multiplayer. "If you stop and listen, you should be able to know where somebody is, what they're shooting, if they're going to kill you or if they're on the same side as you. Our job is to actually encode this information and make it readable by the player. The better we do that job and make the scenario more readable, the better people can decode that and make better decisions while playing. Our job is to make people be able to make those choices and therefore get more enjoyment out of the game."

The assertion that audio helps us get more enjoyment out of games is undeniable. Whether it's something as immediate as some sharp strings accompanying a scare in a horror game, something as subtle as a small musical flourish that helps an emotional moment hit home, or something as practical as hearing the footsteps that help us locate a foe in a multiplayer shooter, sound design is always there, making our experiences better.

We might not always notice it by virtue of the skill with which those behind our games' sound ensure it feels like an inseparable part of the fabric of a game's world, but we sure as hell know how vital it is when we take a moment to think about it. Consider this a hat tip to those unsung heroes.





★★★★★ THE BEST STAR WARS GAMES ★★★★★

WHY WAIT FOR THE NEW STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT? THERE ARE ALREADY A HOST OF AMAZING STAR WARS GAMES OUT THERE FOR YOU TO TRY...



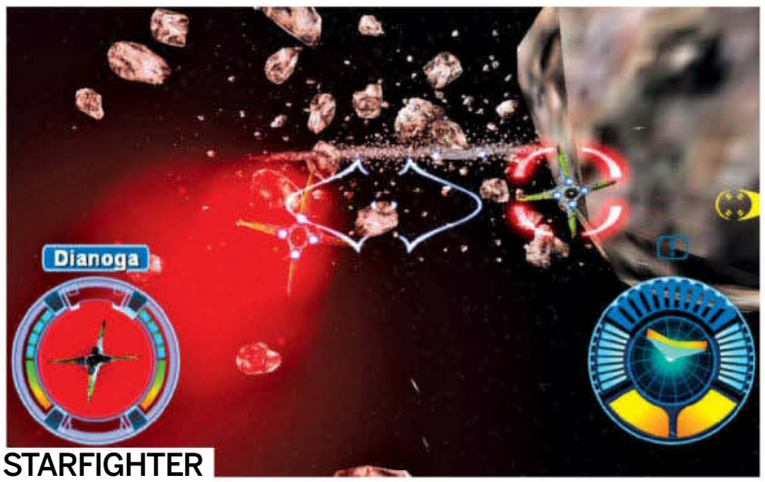
BATTLEFRONT II

ONE OF THE reasons people are so excited about *Battlefront* coming to PS4 this year (aside from the fact that it's a new *Star Wars* game) is that they remember how great *Battlefront II* was when it released on PS2. It was an excellent class-based shooter, renowned for its epic battles in which you could take the fight to your enemies on foot, in tanks and in space. It also introduced a mechanic whereby you could respawn as a hero character. It looks as if the new *Battlefront* game will emulate this in some form, with Darth Vader revealed as a playable character. *Battlefront II* also had something that the new *Battlefront* won't have, to the dismay of many of its many fans: space battles. We have to admit, the option to partake in space dogfights with X-Wings and TIE Fighters is a disappointing omission.



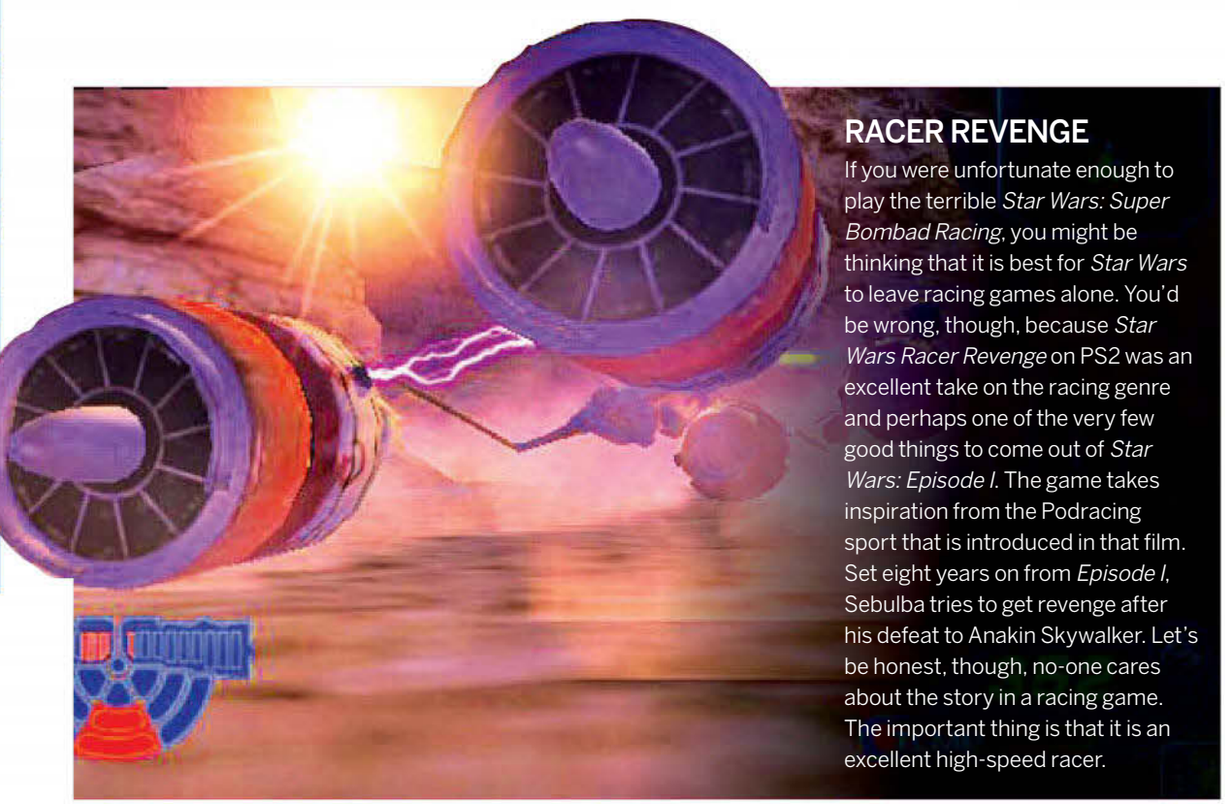
THE FORCE UNLEASHED

GRANTED, THE QUALITY of *The Force Unleashed* didn't quite match up to the awesome concept of playing as Darth Vader's secret apprentice, but it's still a decent game. To pretty much nobody's surprise, you eventually end up fighting against him as the game reaches its climax. The gameplay is focused around using your various lightsaber and Force abilities, which can be upgraded as you progress though the game.



STARFIGHTER

STAR WARS HAS a long history when it comes to space combat games and PlayStation wasn't left out, getting *Starfighter* on the PS2 in 2001. The game ties in with *Episode I* in that it sees you defending the planet Naboo. It's not got the reputation of other *Star Wars* dogfighters like the *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* games and nor would we suggest it should do. Still, it's a worthwhile collection of fun and fast-paced missions.



RACER REVENGE

If you were unfortunate enough to play the terrible *Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing*, you might be thinking that it is best for *Star Wars* to leave racing games alone. You'd be wrong, though, because *Star Wars Racer Revenge* on PS2 was an excellent take on the racing genre and perhaps one of the very few good things to come out of *Star Wars: Episode I*. The game takes inspiration from the Podracing sport that is introduced in that film. Set eight years on from *Episode I*, Sebulba tries to get revenge after his defeat to Anakin Skywalker. Let's be honest, though, no-one cares about the story in a racing game. The important thing is that it is an excellent high-speed racer.



KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE to concede that the title that many consider to be the greatest *Star Wars* game did not appear on PlayStation. As you'd expect from the excellent team at BioWare – who are behind the *Mass Effect* and *Dragon Age* series – *Knights Of The Old Republic* was a game that was based around giving you choice as to how you approached it. That started with customising your character, both in terms of what class you selected on starting the game and how you upgraded their abilities as you progressed. The choices you made when it came to interacting with other characters would impact on the story, tying into the *Star Wars* universe's opposition between the Light and Dark sides. It had a pretty good twist, too, but we'll leave that for you to discover...



LEGO STAR WARS 2

THE SECOND INSTALMENT of *Lego Star Wars* instantly trumped its predecessor by virtue of the fact that it is based on the original trilogy of *Star Wars* films, rather than the prequels. As with pretty much every *Lego* game, it retells the original story with the lighthearted comic edge for which the *Lego* games have become famed. Brilliant in its fan service, *Lego Star Wars 2* lets you play as a whole host of iconic *Star Wars* characters like Luke, Leia and Han.



JEDI KNIGHT: JEDI ACADEMY

REGRETTABLY, IT NEVER made its way to PlayStation, but we feel we have to include *Jedi Academy* in this list because it's one of the few *Star Wars* games that came close to giving us what we wanted when we imagined playing as a Jedi. You could choose to wield one lightsaber, dual-wield two or use a double lightsaber similar to Darth Maul's. The game brought that flexibility to your Force powers, too, enabling you to choose what powers you wanted to unlock and upgrade.



DARK FORCES

THIS GAME, WHICH hit the PlayStation back in 1998, was not only a great game in itself, but incredibly influential. It included mechanics that weren't common to the FPS genre such as the ability to look up and down, and levels with multiple floors. It also birthed the *Jedi Knight* series, giving us *Dark Forces II* and *Jedi Academy*. This game introduced Kyle Katarn, whose story would be told over the course of the *Jedi Knight* series of games.

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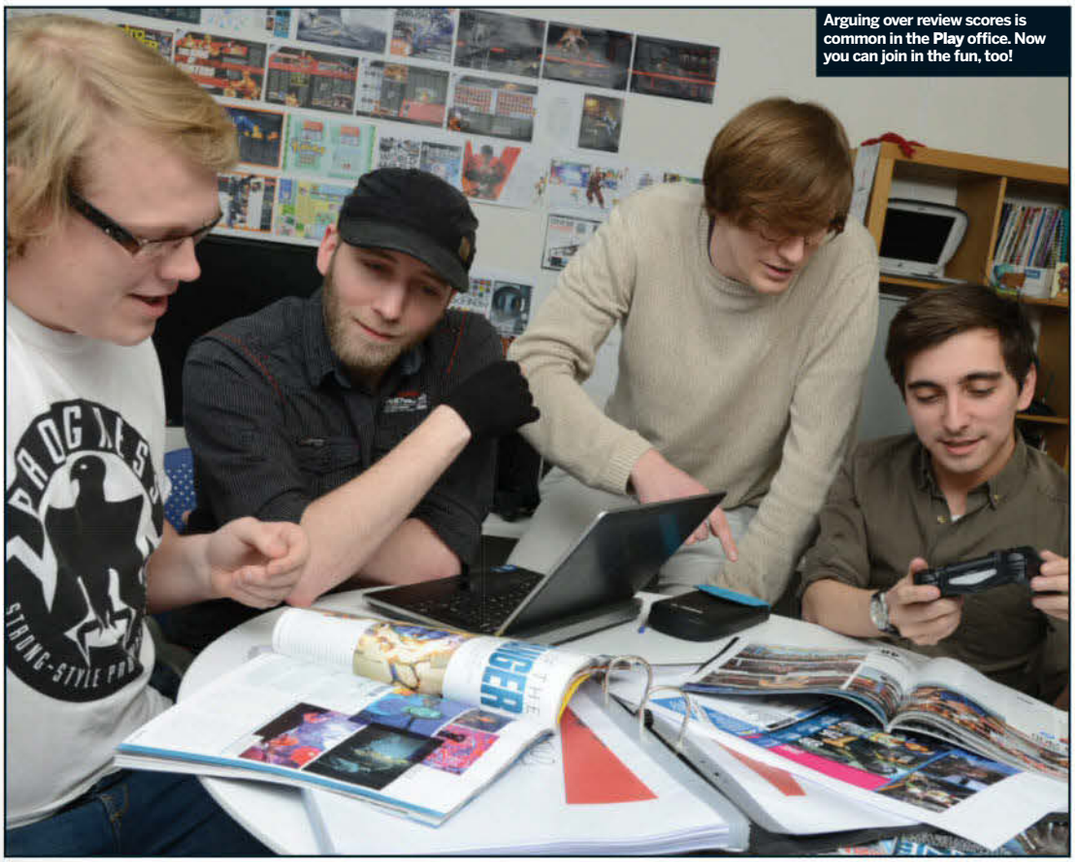


Luke Albigés
Editor

As much as we love to wax lyrical about the latest PS4 releases, it's long been the case that a lot of players deal purely in numbers. If you're part of this new, connected, no-nonsense generation, you'll love Just A Score – the new social scoring app we'll be using to dish out ratings from now on. You can follow us, see trending topics, check our scores and even share your own opinions on anything you like. Don't miss out on the fun – get involved today!



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PLAY PICK OF THE SCORES...



The best and worst of E3

Surprise console announcements, eyebrow-raising price tags, embarrassing presentations... E3 has had it all over the years. Here are a few of our highlights.

- 10 — PlayMag_UK scored **10** for Konami @ E3 2010
- 4 — PlayMag_UK scored **4** for Sony @ E3 2006
- 4 — PlayMag_UK scored **4** for Sega @ E3 1995
- 3 — PlayMag_UK scored **3** for Nintendo @ E3 2008
- 2 — PlayMag_UK scored **2** for Ubisoft @ E3 2009
- 1 — PlayMag_UK scored **1** for Activision @ E3 2007

Project Cars

With its wheels finally rolling, does it live up to the hype?



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Slightly Mad Studios

DEVELOPER
Slightly Mad Studios

PSN PRICE
£44.99

PLAYERS
1-16

INSTALL SIZE
17.8 GB

AGE RATING
3+

TWITTER
@projectcarsgame

Trophies 46

1 3 5 37

PS4

OH, SLIGHTLY MAD

Studios. You were so nearly there. There are some glorious moments when *Project Cars* operates as simply the best racing simulator ever made. When everything clicks together, it's a visual, aural and dynamic spectacle unrivalled by any predecessor in this genre, yet, almost as soon as they arrive, these moments vanish into the virtual ether. Why does this happen in the first PlayStation game to truly challenge the *Gran Turismo*'s place atop the podium? Because *Project Cars* happens to have more bugs than the first *Men In Black* movie, something that is especially irritating when we have been waiting for this release since October last year, when the first of three delays to the initial launch date was announced.

Here at **Play** we're ever the optimists, though, so let us start with the good bits. *Project Cars* is surely the most diverse circuit racing game we're likely to see in this era of ever-homogenised releases. From open-wheel single seaters to fire-breathing classic touring cars, there is a motorised steed to satisfy every petrolhead. What's more, after having a play in the 250cc Superkarts, we can categorically confirm that every PS4 game needs these. Period. The next *Call Of Duty* could definitely benefit from some 250cc Superkarts. They're insanely awesome.

Once you've salivated over the selection of metal on offer, you'll also struggle to choose which circuit to race at in the free play modes. There are over 30 different locations (and more than 70 different layouts), with the vast majority licensed real-world tracks. Faithfully recreated, these are undoubtedly the best track scans ever seen on a console. Once out on track, you'll also find that the dynamic lighting and weather is jaw-dropping. The day-to-night change is subtle but, once you start to get blinded by the setting sun you'll struggle to pick your gob up off the floor. It's the same deal with the weather, with light rain able to gradually increase your lap times until puddles of water are visible around the circuit. As much as it's a cliché to say it: it's just like the real thing.

You'll see things go downhill from here, though. For the most part, the handling of the cars is superb (with plenty of adjustment on tap). However, car models – especially the historical F1 cars – feel unfinished. We get that a 500hp cigar tube with no aerodynamics is going to be hard to handle, but the way they behave feels unnatural, as if the difficulty has been arbitrarily increased.

Similarly, the AI is fully capable of operating at both the sublime and the ridiculous ends of the spectrum. In certain classes (GT3, for example) the track action is tough but fair, requiring you to use a fair bit of brainpower and skill (remember those?) to overtake. Other races, though, see the AI simply ignore your existence, all while spinning off the track, flipping over kerbs and running into one another. Whether in a quick race or during the fully unlocked career mode (which is nothing to write home about), the AI forces the game to walk a line between a 10/10 beauty and a 1/10 travesty. Thankfully, the online racing is actually top-notch with the currently small number of online players proving incredibly respectful, no doubt as a result of *Project Cars*' crowd-developed platform.

We could have overlooked these flaws (and easily scored the game 9/10) if it wasn't for the number of unresolved bugs in *Project Cars*, however. During



△○×□ **Oh, that's what can go wrong. It'll buff out.**

www.imagineshop.co.uk





△○×□ **"There's a gap, there's a gap, there's a gap!" Until the AI forgets you exist again.**



"THE AI FORCES THE GAME TO WALK A LINE BETWEEN A 10/10 BEAUTY AND A 1/10 TRAVESTY"

our time behind the steering wheel we've seen both sides of the grid drive into each other off the start line, left the pitlane without a front wheel, been unable to stop in the pitlane later on and had bodywork randomly just fall off when an AI competitor somehow made us roll over. Of course, we're not the only ones afflicted as a quick YouTube search will show you. But, hey, at least we're not Xbox One users – they've got it *really* bad from Slightly Mad, apparently.

Along with the confusing menus, noticeable lag when using a pad, need to adjust steering wheel settings and unpolished gear change animations, it all adds up the feeling that *Project Cars* was simply too big a project for such a small developer. After all, if a game gets delayed three times and still doesn't reach the market functioning properly, tough questions have to be asked.

DriveClub, since the recent updates, is definitely the more polished game for PS4 right now but *Project Cars* is the only option for those wanting a proper circuit simulator. If the flaws can be ironed out, it would be streets ahead of Evolution Studios' offering. Hopefully Slightly Mad will make with a patch or three some time soon as, if the motor can be fine-tuned, we really would have something special on our hands here.

Josh Barnett

VERDICT

Graphically stunning, dynamically awesome, aurally beautiful. This is what *Project Cars* could have been if pest control had done a better job exterminating those pesky bugs.

6

PlayMag_UK scored **6** for Project Cars

Follow our scores on JUSTASCORE

OR YOU COULD TRY...

DRIVECLUB Sure, it was broken on release and the PS Plus version is *still* on its way after a year and a half delay but now it's been patched, *Driveclub* is worth your time.



Wolfenstein: The Old Blood

Expansions done right



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Bethesda
DEVELOPER
MachineGames
PSN PRICE
£14.99
PLAYERS
1
INSTALL SIZE
39.2 GB
AGE RATING
18
TWITTER
@machinegames

Trophies 51

1 3 5 42

PS4

ALL TOO OFTEN we see DLC and expansions that struggle to justify their price tags and add little to their full-price counterparts. With *The Old Blood*, however, MachineGames and Bethesda have bucked this trend, developing a marvellous adventure with none of the Season Pass, two-hour long story extension nonsense that most publishers are over-eager to throw out into the market nowadays.

This is a fantastic first-person shooter that is as iconic and retro as it is forward-thinking and modern. The retro aspect comes in the ability to dual-wield, the need for health packs and armour and its proclivity for unyielding violence. On the other hand, this is a shooter that has a real eye for modern, non-linear storytelling, super-tight weapon mechanics and vast environments that allow you to decide whether you want to sneak, stab and takedown your way through the Nazi brigades, or run head-on into them with a couple of shotguns and a heart full of hope and rage.

There are a raft of collectibles and little Easter Eggs in the game that are a particular highlight. They're rarely too well hidden – at least if the ones we found are anything to go by – but provide some welcome relief from the wanton blood, guts and facism of the main game. You've got the usual collectible items and hidden notes like the ones you could collect in *The New Order*, but there are also little interactive moments that provide a bit of humour and is another cool returning element from the parent game. Each and every chapter in *The Old Blood* has a Nightmare level hidden somewhere within it, in which BJ falls asleep and wakes up in a pixellated maze that harks back to his classic id Software adventure, *Wolfenstein 3D*, complete with 2D enemy Nazis and the same old pseudo-3D environments from back in 1992.

> "THERE ARE OTHER LITTLE JOKES THROUGHOUT THAT LIGHTEN THE MOOD AND, TO BE HONEST, THE GAME NEEDS THEM"

It's a knowing nod to the franchise's past and another example of *The Old Blood*'s desire to encourage you to suspend your disbelief and not take things too seriously. There are other little jokes throughout that lighten the mood somewhat and, to be honest, the game needs them. We can't state enough that, for better or worse, the emphasis of *The Old Blood* lies completely in chaotic, unrelenting violence, and so it benefits greatly from some occasional light relief.

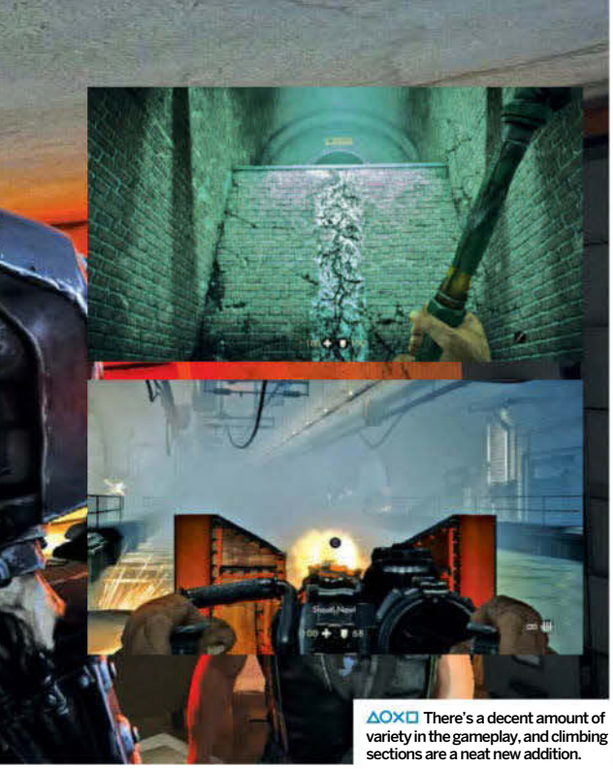


This leads into one of *The Old Blood*'s few apparent flaws – its pacing. During Part One of the game, Rudi Jäger and the Den of Wolves, encounters come so thick and fast that they often feel like they're blending into one, leaving you hankering for even the briefest of respites. This may very well be intentional, but for us we feel like a few periods of relative peace would've been welcome – in fact, this is one of the things that *The New Order* got so right. Still, if relentless running and

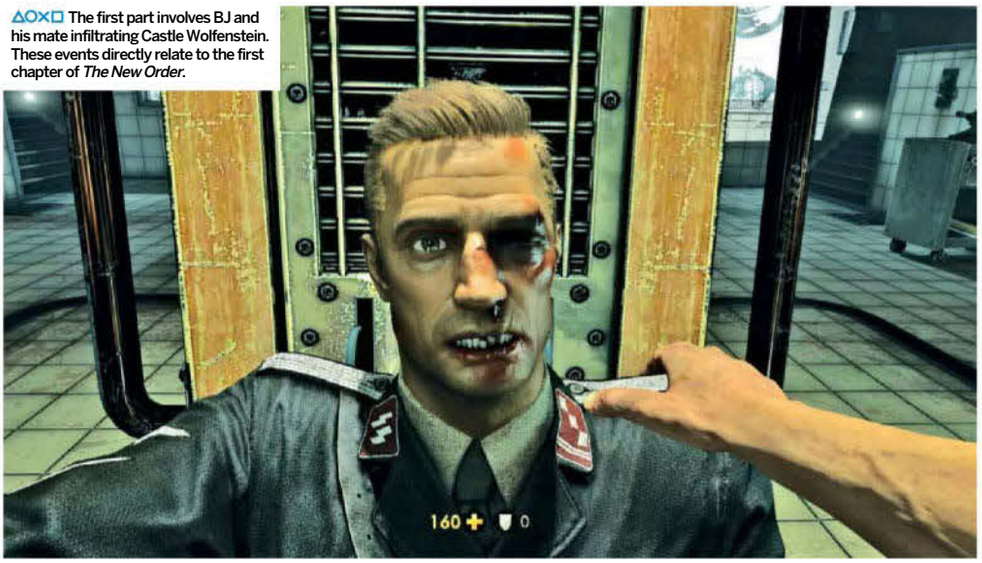
IN THIS SERIES

WOLFENSTEIN: THE NEW ORDER *The Old Blood*'s predecessor isn't quite as tight as this prequel episode is, but it's still a superb shooter with a refreshing old-school approach.

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△○×□ There's a decent amount of variety in the gameplay, and climbing sections are a neat new addition.



△○×□ The first part involves BJ and his mate infiltrating Castle Wolfenstein. These events directly relate to the first chapter of *The New Order*.

gunning is your thing, look no further than *The Old Blood*.

Part Two is paced a little more sensitively, with a few more relaxed passages, but by a couple of hours in it gets crazy, turning into what is essentially a zombie survival horror game. It's amazing how quickly it goes from encouraging you to sneak and approach encounters in a sensible manner to encouraging you to turn feral, charging through corridors armed with a slug gun chewing holes through an undead horde. It's exhilarating, and by the end of *The Old Blood*'s six-hour running time (depending on the difficulty setting and your desire to explore) you'll feel exhausted yet satisfied.

This is a prime example of a developer knowing what to do with an expansion – throw in your lot with all of the elements that made the original strong, then tidy up a couple of mechanics a little bit, boost whatever textures you can and create an interesting and relevant new storyline, all for the price of a takeaway pizza. It's a great price for a great game, and with the collectibles and Challenge maps, there's a hell of a lot of game here.

Steve Holmes

VERDICT

The little nods to *The New Order*'s storyline are subtle yet clever, the action sequences are some of the best on PS4 and William Blazkowicz is still a badass. Get psyched.

8 PlayMag_UK scored **8** for Wolfenstein: The Old Blood

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

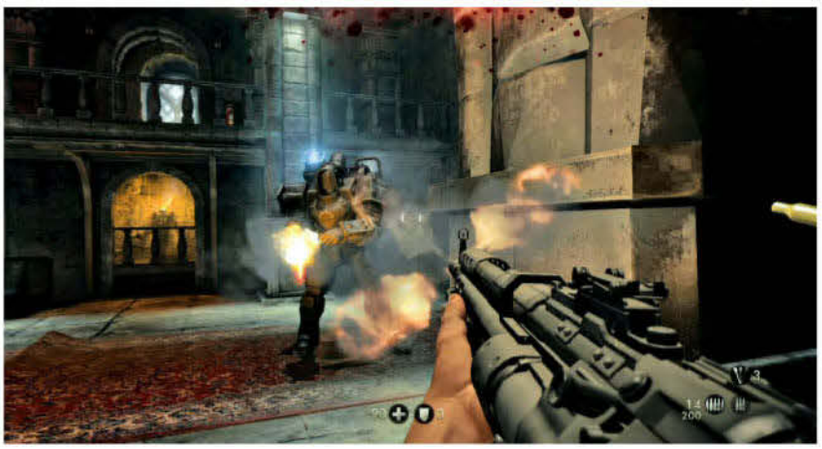


TROPHY CABINET

DIE, GRÖSSE, DIE
You need to make sure that you look carefully for Nightmare levels as you fight your way through each stage – you need to complete all of them for this Trophy.

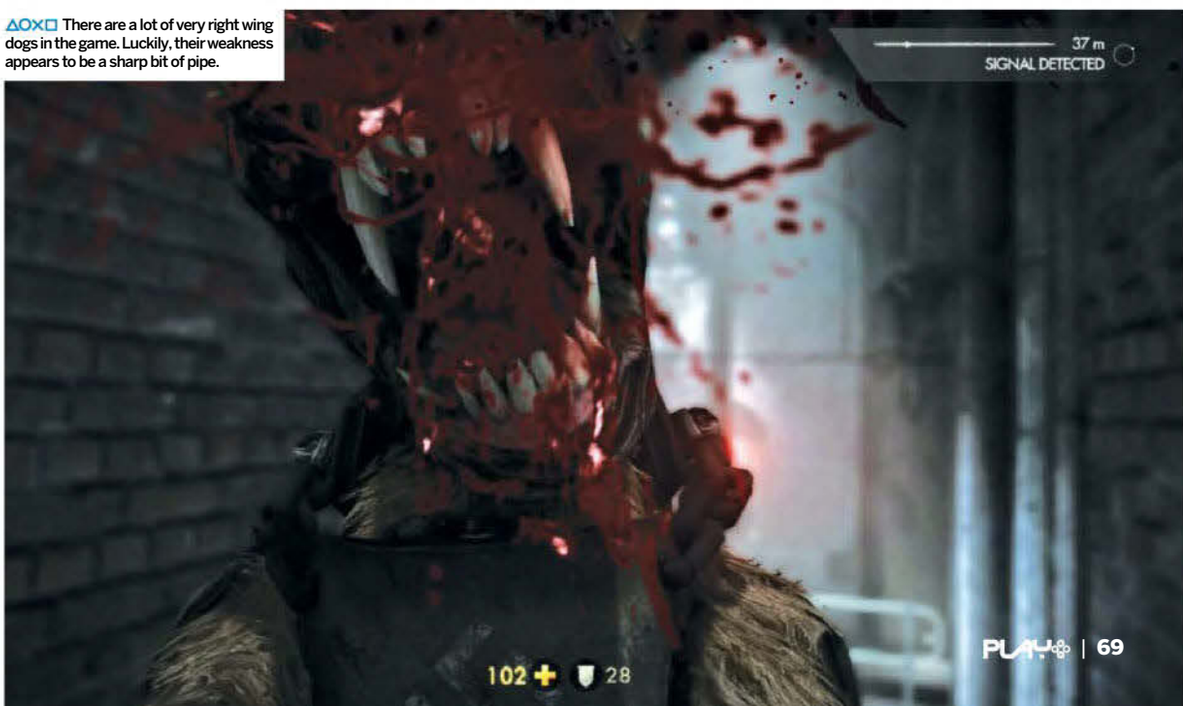


ÜBER HERO
For this tough ol' Trophy, you will need to finish the game on the Über difficulty. We would advise that you take it slow and cross your fingers – this game ain't easy.







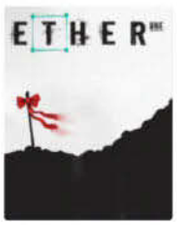


△○×□ There are a lot of very right wing dogs in the game. Luckily, their weakness appears to be a sharp bit of pipe.



Ether One

Forget what you thought you knew



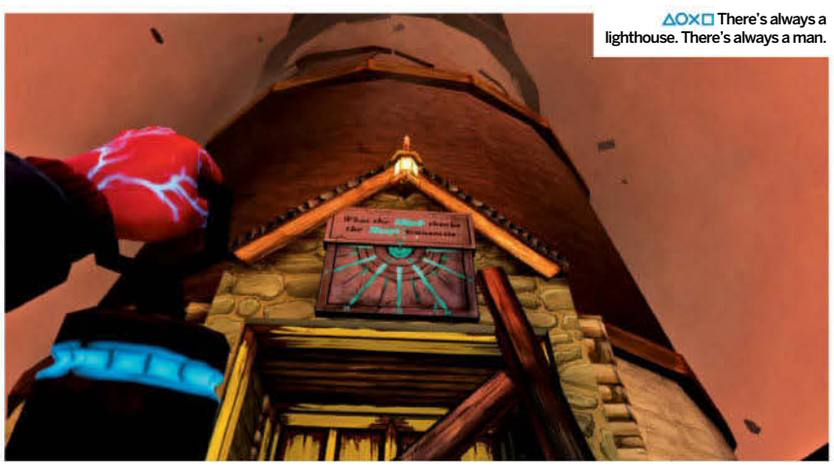
PS4

ETHER ONE IS a game that isn't quite what it appears to be at the outset. It sets itself up as a sci-fi mystery in which you play a 'restorer' who roams the mind of a patient with dementia in order to try and repair their damaged memory. See it through to the end, though, and you'll find that somewhat fantastical concept doesn't really reflect what gradually and skillfully reveals itself to be a far more grounded and relatable story.

There is a constant throughout *Ether One* though, in that it is always about memory. That theme is reflected throughout in an intelligent way; the game carefully keeps you at bay when it comes to understanding where you are and what you're doing, to the effect that as you gather more information from story exposition and the items you find throughout the world, you feel as if you're grasping at a incomplete comprehension of what's going on, as you might struggle to recall a fuzzy memory that slips through your fingers as soon as you think you just might remember.

Naturally, you come to a far more complete understanding as you reach the game's conclusion, though the degree to which you'll comprehend the tale being told relies, to an extent, on the effort you are willing to put in. It is possible to progress through the game by exploring its environments and finding red ribbons that unlock the next section of story. However, each area is filled with a number of optional puzzles that will provide you with more context on the absent characters the game revolves around.

Structuring *Ether One* in that fashion is a smart way of ensuring that getting stuck on a puzzle won't impede your enjoyment of the game as a whole. Whenever you're stumped, you can just move on, and because the game allows you to warp between different parts of the



△○×□ There's always a lighthouse. There's always a man.

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
White Paper Games

DEVELOPER
In-house

PSN PRICE
£15.49

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
3.3 GB

AGE RATING
3+

TWITTER
@WhitePaperGames

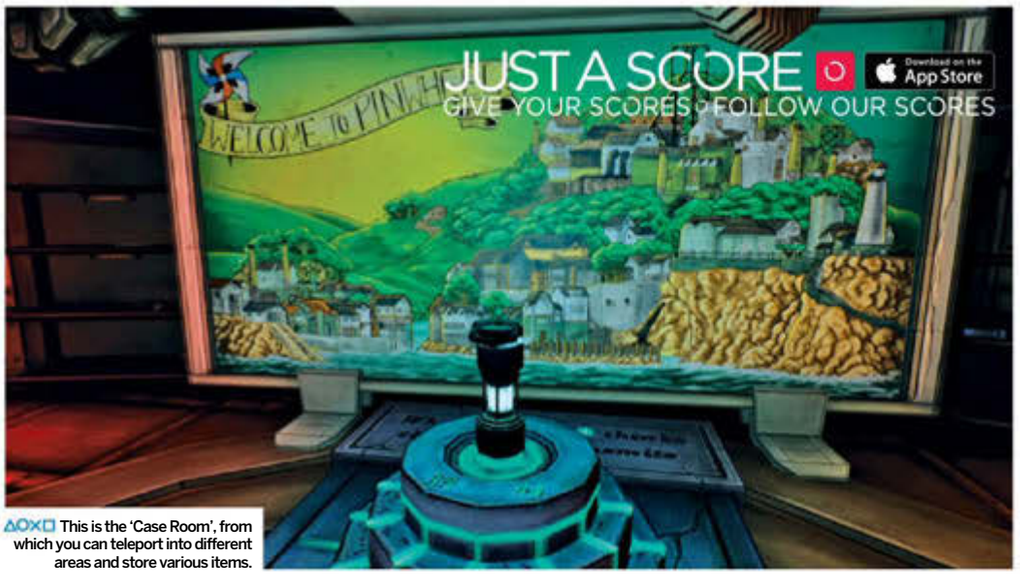
Trophies 13

1	10	2	0

OR YOU COULD TRY

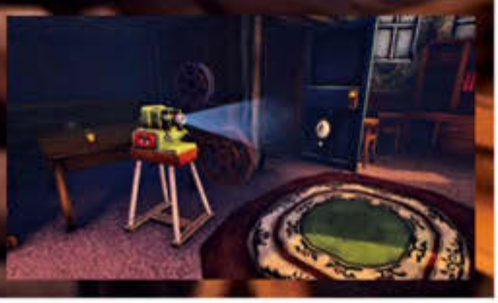
EVERYBODY'S GONE TO THE RAPTURE If you enjoy wandering through an environment and unearthing the stories hidden within it, *Everybody's Gone To The Rapture* looks to be an ideal alternative.





△○×□ This is the 'Case Room', from which you can teleport into different areas and store various items.







world, it's possible to return and tidy up any stray puzzles later on.

In part, though, it feels like this concession is a reflection of the fact that *Ether One*'s puzzles can be incredibly obtuse. To a degree, we feel compelled to praise *Ether One* for that. The game only ever provides you with the slightest of hints about what to do – to the point that sometimes you're not sure if you've found a puzzle to be completed or not – and it is content to trust you to work things out yourself. Given that the tendency for adventure games is to move towards being ever more accessible, dumbing down puzzles or removing them entirely, it's nice to see a game that wants to offer a legitimate challenge.

That doesn't change the fact that the game can be incredibly frustrating, however. Sure, you're free to move on if you're struggling to complete a puzzle, but if you *do* want to get through all those optional extras, you can't help but find yourself wondering if some puzzles couldn't be better signposted or, at the very least, feel a lot less opaque.

> "IT IS IN ITS THEMATIC CONSISTENCY THAT ETHER ONE EXCELS"

That frustration can be compounded by the fact that you can only carry one item at a time, which can be annoying when you're experimenting with different solutions. You can warp back to what the game calls your 'Case Room' to store and swap items with relative speed, but this can feel like an unnecessary hoop to jump through. Having said that, we do like the way that, as you accrue shelves full of items, remembering what you have, where you found it and what it might be for becomes a mental juggling act that reflects the themes of the game and the struggles of its characters in an interesting way. It helps the focus that *Ether One* places on the importance of individual objects too, cognisant as it is of the way that we can imbue them with a great deal of importance and how they can spark memories in us as a result.

Ether One can occasionally feel a little directionless and overwhelming if you try to tackle all the puzzles laid out before for you. However, that's an appropriate reflection of the kind of feeling that the game is trying to generate. It is in that thematic consistency that *Ether One* excels, expertly using every element at its disposal to craft a melancholy world that reveals its secrets with subtlety.

Paul Walker-Emig

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

Played the first 15 minutes and thought to myself: "I'm saving this for a chilled Sunday afternoon."
@Past_the_pixels

Hoping I can find *Shenmue 3* locked somewhere in this persons brain.
@ItaliaNick84

Started playing loved it so far, but hit a crash bug right after an auto save so gotta start over. :(
@audi2k200

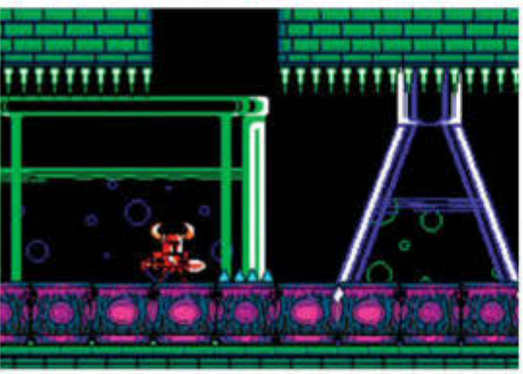
Odd. Not much of a fan of the art style, seems a little rough around the edges. The story was interesting, but apart from wondering around a few places collecting ribbons there wasn't much you needed to do. If you're going to make a decent game make some of the puzzles integral to progressing.
Callum Thomson

VERDICT

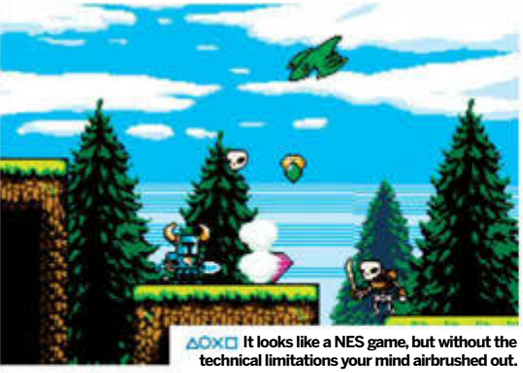
An emotionally impactful tale that's enhanced by the game's commitment to its thematic core of memory, but one that can get frustrating due to its rather tricky puzzles.

8 PlayMag_UK scored **8** for Ether One
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE









△○×□ It looks like a NES game, but without the technical limitations your mind airbrushed out.

Shovel Knight

Beg, burrow or steal for this



PS4

ALSO ON PS3 & VITA

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Yacht Club Games

DEVELOPER
In house

PSN PRICE
£11.99

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
147 MB

AGE RATING
7+

TWITTER
@YachtClubGames

Trophies 38

1 6 3 28

NOSTALGIA IS A funny thing. The longer you go without actively experiencing an old favourite game, the more likely you are to start viewing it with rose-tinted glasses, and if you go for long enough, your brain creates a fantastic director's cut that will only ever exist in your addled memory. Yacht Club Games has recognised this, and *Shovel Knight* is an idealised vision of pre-PlayStation gaming that draws influences from Eighties classics without ever being beholden to them. This isn't 8-bit gaming as it was – this is 8-bit gaming as every misty-eyed NES kid remembers it.

Shovel Knight's quest to rescue Shield Knight takes the familiar form of a platform game, and influences will become apparent as soon as you begin to play. For example, the overworld map with its wandering enemies is pure *Super Mario Bros. 3* and *Shovel Knight*'s hopping attack has come straight from *DuckTales*. Elsewhere, you'll see *Castlevania* in the wall-based secrets and secondary weapon system, shades of the *Zelda* and *Wonder Boy* games in the health, armour and item upgrades, and even some *Mega Man* in the rooms with singular oversized enemies.

But while Yacht Club was clearly influenced by all of the aforementioned games, *Shovel Knight* employs some very modern mechanics to avoid the frustration associated with so many Eighties platformers. For a start, death matters despite your infinite lives. Upon death, you'll lose some of the treasure gained from digging up dirt mounds and defeating enemies and it is placed into the stage as floating bags – pick them up and you recover the treasure, miss them or die again and they're gone. The game doesn't have nearly the same masochistic difficulty level as the likes of *Super Meat Boy*, but you can make it harder on the fly by destroying the plentiful checkpoints for additional treasure, and you'll really have to work for the Trophies – the gold ones require death-free completions, damage-free stage completions and the like.

There's a lot to do, too. The eight main stages are all substantial, but the map holds a wide variety of additional challenges from one-off boss fights

FOR FANS OF... △ **ROGUE LEGACY** If you love the combat platforming of this indie darling but don't mind losing the random stage generation, *Shovel Knight* will suit your tastes.

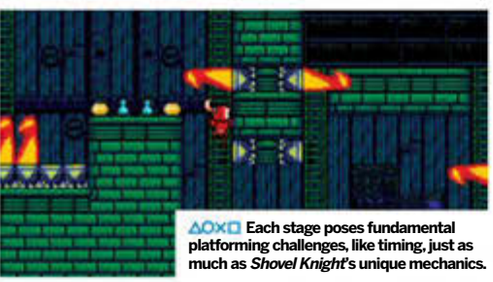
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"THIS ISN'T 8-BIT GAMING AS IT WAS – THIS IS 8-BIT GAMING AS EVERY MISTY-EYED NES KID REMEMBERS IT"





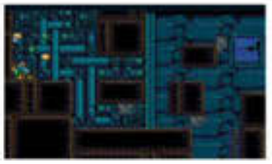
△○×□ **Each stage poses fundamental platforming challenges, like timing, just as much as *Shovel Knight*'s unique mechanics.**





TROPHY CABINET

MUSIC LOVER
The easiest sheets to miss are those hidden out of sight – don't forget to use your fishing rod.



SPARKER
Wear the boss down first, then use the Troupple King's magical ichor to refill your health for a finishing ground spark.

to additional challenge stages, often based on a specific item. Each of the town areas allows you to shop for upgrades, but also hosts mini-games and background characters to chat to in order to flesh out the world. That's to say nothing of the wealth of secrets that each stage holds, from the usual power-ups in walls to hidden music sheets and additional abilities. Pacing is superb throughout – *Shovel Knight* constantly introduces new concepts and level design elements right up to the end, ensuring that there's always something novel to hold your attention.

In much the same way as the epic game design is inspired by Eighties hits, the visuals are inspired by the limitations of the NES. Sprite design is very close to that classic look, but the backgrounds are often a cut above the reality of that console, featuring parallax scrolling effects and overall complexity that speak of a different era. It's a good look, and another case of Yacht Club making judgement calls to deliver the kind of experience we reminisce about, rather than the reality of Eighties gaming. The chiptune music is similarly excellent, with some memorable stage themes and boss fight music that adequately instils a sense of urgency in players.

When making a game like *Shovel Knight* that deliberately plays on nostalgia, it can sometimes be easy to fall into the trap of making a tribute act. Yacht Club Games hasn't done that – the team clearly understands the games that it drew inspiration from and combined those influences in a novel way. The addition of modern design elements elevates the game to the level of a classic that stands alongside the games it imitates. If it had been released on the NES, *Shovel Knight* would likely have been hailed as the best game ever made, and if you're nostalgic for that era you'll love it. But even if you never owned a NES, the fact remains that *Shovel Knight* is still an expertly designed game and the best 2D platformer in years.

Nick Thorpe

VERDICT

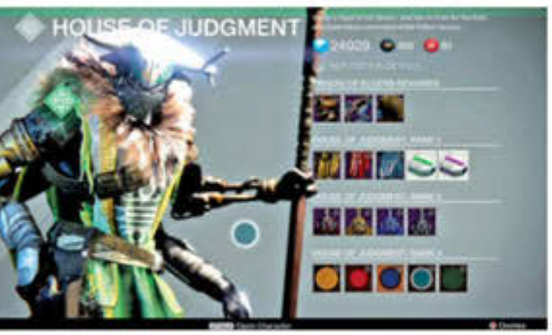
A well-written love letter to the classic games of the Eighties that blends a variety of classic platformers into a game that works regardless of any nostalgia. We dig it.

9
PlayMag_UK scored **9** for
Shovel Knight
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



△○×□ Sure, they're not exactly common but loot drops like this make us so unbelievably glad that we have the internet.





Destiny: House Of Wolves

"Today, we're delivering explosions!"



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Activision

DEVELOPER
Bungie

PSN PRICE
£19.99

PLAYERS
1-12

AGE RATING
15+

TWITTER
@Bungie

PS4

ALSO ON PS3

THE ONLY GOOD thing to come out of The *Dark Below* was Black Hammer. There, we said it. While it was great to finally be blessed with new content, Bungie's first expansion for *Destiny* offered as many new problems as it did fixes to old ones. Currencies got out of hand, story missions almost exclusively retrod old ground, legacy players were locked out of regular events unless they bought the add-on... it was all a bit of a mess. That didn't stop us playing it for weeks in search of the gear to get us to level 32, of course, but it was just a shame – a chance at large-scale redemption squandered. And with the Crota's End raid culminating in a battle where only one player really got to be the hero (as opposed to Vault Of Glass, where everyone gets to feel like a special snowflake), the only thing that kept us coming back was the fact that Crota seemed too attached to his raid gear to actually let us have any.

At a glance, *House Of Wolves* looks to be an even worse proposition – content is still rather thin on the ground and there's no new raid. But once you dive in, it quickly becomes clear that changes across the board have actually fixed more than they have broken this time. Currency issues have largely been resolved, a self-contained story arc holds together better than the core game's clumsy attempt at narrative and your guides through this new adventure are easily the two most appealing characters in the entire game. In lieu of another six-player raid, Bungie instead presents a pair of three-Guardian events – PvE arena Prison Of Elders and weekly PvP event Trials Of Osiris. Each prong leads to armour capable of reaching the new level cap of 34, meaning you're no longer forced to find a party of six or wait for Iron Banner events to max out your gear. You don't even *need* to chase down that new gear either, that's the best part. It'll make it easier in the short term, sure, but you're also able to use Etheric Light (a new rare end-game material) to ascend any existing piece of Legendary equipment to the maximum level. Everything from old raid weapons to launch purples can be made viable, opening up endless potential in terms of character builds and making Fashion *Destiny* the real deal.

Before you can do any of that, there's the small matter of new story stuff to blast through. Again, it's a handful of new missions that retread old ground



JUST A SCORE
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△○×□ If Bungie dropped new dance moves as DLC, we'd buy them in a heartbeat. Yes, we know we're part of the problem. No, we don't care.





△○×□ This gun is called the Vestian Dynasty but we've affectionately called it 'Pew Pew'.

(though it's a shame *The Dark Below* already saw critics call foul over this, since *House Of Wolves*' repurposing is done far more knowingly and with actual narrative context) with a pretty cool new Strike mission towards the end where you pursue a Fallen target through an airborne Ketch. The whole quest line is brief, sure, and outside of the Strike, it's unlikely you'll return to any of the missions unless they come up as the Heroic Daily Story event, but then that's sort of the point. This short passage of gameplay provides context for the new end-game activities, some decent new gear – the rapid-fire Vestian Dynasty sidearm being a particular highlight – and a handful of choice quotes, then it's on to the real meat of this expansion.









"IT QUICKLY BECOMES CLEAR THAT CHANGES ACROSS THE BOARD HAVE ACTUALLY FIXED MORE THAN THEY HAVE BROKEN THIS TIME"

Trials only runs from Friday evenings to Tuesday mornings, a competitive multiplayer mode revolving around quick elimination rounds in a first-to-five format on a single predetermined map each week. It's stressful, placing focus on coordination and communication with your Fireteam (there's no matchmaking) and while inexperienced players may just find it infuriating, those who know their multiplayer shooters will find many a use for the Share button here. On the other side of the solar system, the Prison Of Elders offers a horde mode of sorts, one playlist of randomised enemy waves and modifiers and three curated lists that rotate weekly. The higher you crank the difficulty, the better the rewards and while some of the bosses here are a little on the cheap side, the intensity of later stages can be pretty satisfying. That's not going to stop us calling bullshit on Bungie's insistence on over-levelled enemies rather than genuine challenge for the final difficulty hurdle, though. It's just a bit lazy, really.

That initial glut of content is really quite healthy, then, but it's the ongoing support that will keep this alive until the next chapter hits. So far, it's looking pretty good. Trials' weekly map selection means there'll be peaks and troughs based on personal preference, while Prison's rotating challenges and rewards offer an ongoing reason to keep returning. Maxing out characters has never been easier or more versatile, and there's more to do when you get to the cap – not *loads* more, sure, but enough to at least tide you over to the next drop. Destiny is back on track, then, and we're hooked again. Expansion Pass vets are already in and for those who didn't get *The Dark Below*, the fact that all the MP maps from it are in general rotation and the majority of the gear is irrelevant means returning players can just pick up *House Of Wolves* without missing out on too much. Except the Black Hammer, which probably isn't worth the extra £15. Okay, maybe it is.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

From a stumble with *The Dark Below* to great strides in the right direction with *House Of Wolves*, Bungie seems to be slowly turning *Destiny* into the game it always had the potential to be.

8
PlayMag_UK scored **8** for
Destiny: House Of Wolves
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

REVIEW ROUND-UP



WE'VE FOUND THERE to be something incredibly compelling about **THE ESCAPISTS [A]**, despite the fact that our time with it mainly consisted of searching for plastic forks to scratch a hole in our cell wall. That's the thing about this game, though – the simplest things can become incredibly exciting when you feel like you're edging close to making an escape plan become reality. And it will be your plan, because *The Escapists* provides very little direction. Nor should it, because there are a variety of different ways in which you can make your escape, and discovering the possibilities for yourself is part of the fun. Of course, that also means that breaking out is far from easy, but, again, that's part of what makes the game appealing – it's going to feel significant when you eventually do get out, because of the fact that it's not a an easy task. The game can be a little frustrating sometimes – you'll inevitably end up with one or two enemies that frequently attack you on sight, for example. Aside from minor issues like that, this is a great game built around a fantastic concept.

TOREN [B] is a game that's also got a great concept but, unfortunately, it's not quite as well implemented. The game tells the story of a young girl that grows up as you climb your way up a crumbling tower in order to defeat a dragon at the top. It does use the theme of death and rebirth in some interesting ways, but you can't help but think there was more potential to connect the game's story and mechanics, particularly when it comes to seeing its protagonist through the different stages of her life.

"WE DOUBT THERE'S ANYTHING WE CAN TELL YOU ABOUT FARMING SIMULATOR 2015 THAT'S GOING TO SURPRISE YOU"

The most obvious problems with the game, however, are its technical issues: a choppy frame-rate, screen tearing, awful combat, the fact that the heroine controls like she's wading through treacle and jumps as if she's an action figure tied to some string, being guided across gaps by an puppeteer. In spite of its obvious and myriad problems, we somehow still ended up feeling quite affectionate towards *Toren*. Don't take that as a recommendation, because there's far too much wrong with the game to give it that. Nevertheless, there's something both in the structure and spirit of *Toren* that hints at the prospect of a far better game, even if it fails to realise it.

We're spoilt with games with good ideas in this issue, because



△○×□ You've got to follow the prison routine to some extent to avoid the guards' unwanted attention.

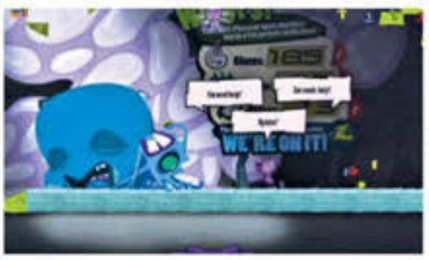




△○×□ Trust us when we say that fighting this dragon isn't as epic as it looks.



C





D

△○×□ All this wheat is enough to make a seasoned farmer salivate...

SCHRÖDINGER'S CAT AND THE RAIDERS OF THE LOST QUARK [C] is another such game. In this 2D platformer you collect quarks as you move through the game's stages. Quarks come in four varieties and you can then combine these in differing combinations using the shoulder buttons in order to create effects that will allow you to progress through the level. One 'up quark' and a couple of 'down quarks', for example, will fire off a missile that will remove destructible terrain from your path. Combine 'up quarks' with 'top quarks' on the other hand, and you'll create a moving platform that will transport you across gaps. It's easier to grasp and more instinctive to play with in practice than it sounds in theory, and it leads to some interesting puzzles that leverage this unique system well. Yet, those interesting moments are often broken up with sections that feel far too pedestrian. That's particularly true of the game's procedurally generated areas, which are terribly dull to navigate. In fact, you wouldn't even call those sections that *have* been designed inspired. It's far from being perfect then, but a decent puzzle game nonetheless.

We doubt there's anything we can tell you about **FARMING SIMULATOR 2015 [D]** that's going to surprise you. What do you expect? It's a farming simulator, so you must plough fields, plant seeds, reap what you've sown by getting the harvester out and so on. Outside of driving about on your farm, there's also a management aspect to the game as you sell crops and buy land and livestock. For what it is, we can't deny that the game's well put together, but, needless to say, you have to be certain type of person to really get into it. Granted, there is something oddly relaxing about slowly driving a harvester over a field of wheat before taking your haul off to be sold, but to really get into the game, you're going to have to be someone who is really into the process of managing and planning.

Moving on to something we are very much into, we've been singing the praises of the exceptional **LIFE IS STRANGE [E]** for a couple of months now. However, we've got mixed feelings on the third episode, *Chaos Theory*. While we still enjoyed the episode as a whole and many of the series' strengths so far were in evidence, such as superb direction and the game's use of stillness, there were a couple of things that concerned us. For one, Chloe's characterisation started to come off as overly simplistic (though, granted, a bit of optional exploration can reveal subtler wrinkles to her character). Most concerning though, is the game's ending, that, needless to say, we won't spoil here. What we will say is that while undeniably effective (even if it is a little cliché), it raises some serious questions about whether the choices you've made up until now will matter. We are still definitely on board with a game that's been almost universally brilliant, but the next episode will take it into new areas which will make or break it.

△○×□ Breaking into stuff is Max and Chloe's favourite pastime in the latest episode of *Life Is Strange*.



E

PLAY PLUS

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INTERVIEW

ROCKET LEAGUE

We speak to Psyonix's Jeremy Dunham as the developer gears up to release the game after a very successful beta

You must be pretty excited about the surprise interest *Rocket League* had during the bet...
Oh yes, absolutely, for exactly that reason. *Battle Cars* was actually a surprise success, a lot of folks don't realise that it came out at a time when the PlayStation Network was first sort of trying to get a foothold and a lot of the games out there that were also out there on the PlayStation Store had a much bigger marketing team than us, or were more higher profile. But very quietly over time the original *Supersonic Rocket-Powered Battle Cars* – you can see why we shortened it to *Rocket League* – amassed well over two million downloads.

How did it feel with *Rocket League* being so popular, even with just a beta?
It's really nice to see it! Especially when you know as part of an indie development group that you don't have the money to spend on traditional marketing, you don't have the reputation as a developer that a lot of larger developers do, and really you're introducing yourself to a lot of new people for the first time. The fact that it's going over so well, the studio is elated. It has made everyone so happy that as we get closer to release our lists of things we wanted to add post-release just keep getting bigger and bigger.

> "PS4 IS JUST VERY INDIE DEVELOPER FRIENDLY, BECAUSE IT'S SO GOOD FOR DELIVERING DIGITAL CONTENT"

What sorts of comments have you been getting from veteran *Battle Cars* players?
Well that's the part that has really made us feel good, because we've had really positive comments from people who didn't know about the series at all and the veteran players have been pretty united since the game was released in alpha on PC. We were really testing things out but they've been really supportive, they really like the game, they know we respect their opinions and we've been posting videos of the more pro players out there every now and then. And we feel like we have built a true relationship with them, where we can talk with them about a game, they can give us candid feedback and they do it in a way that we believe them and it's not the typical kind of internet feedback either where 'everything sucks, make everything better'. It's true critical feedback, and they're excited too.

So how did you go about developing *Rocket League*? Did you use *Battle Cars* as a foundation? What did you want to add or improve?
Well it was a delicate balance, because we wanted to improve everything: we wanted to have better physics, we wanted it to look better, we wanted it to run better, we wanted it to have more features, we wanted to be more supportive of the eSports community, we wanted it to have a lot more

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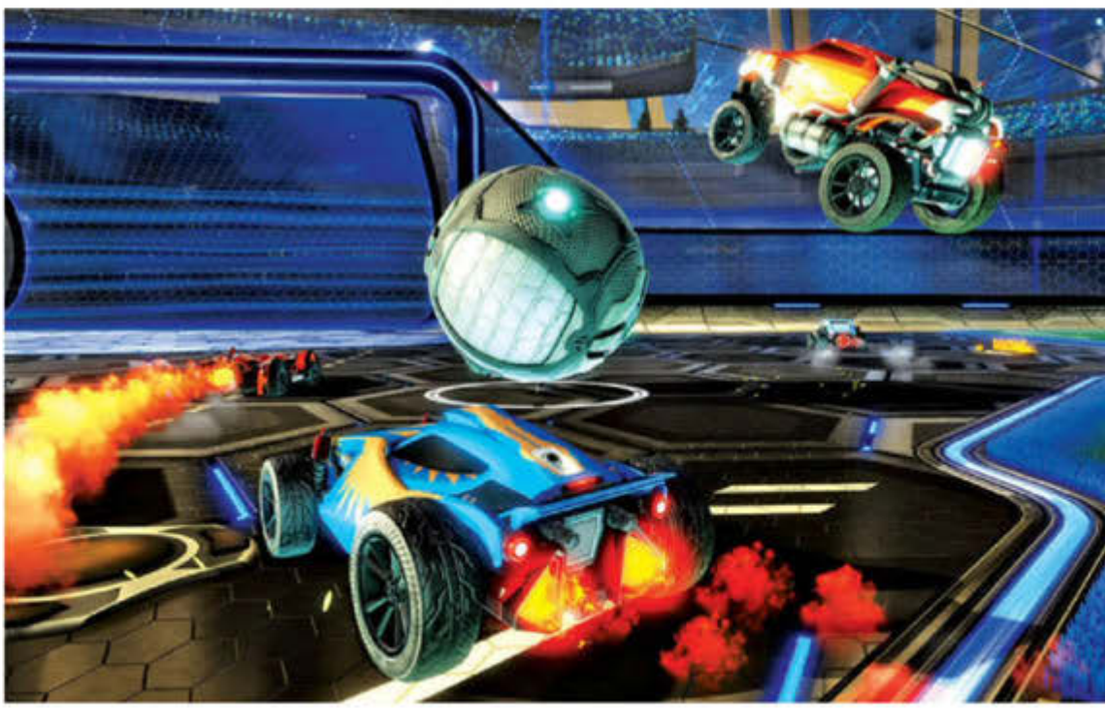


△○×□ Football mixed with rocket-powered cars. Who'd have thought THAT could work?

△○×□ There's potential for some proper highlight reel stuff when you get good...



customisation, we wanted more single-player options so you didn't feel forced to play only multiplayer. We wanted all these things, but at the same time we didn't want to change a thing. If you change this game that people have loved for so many years and the whole reason they're excited for a sequel in the first place, changing it too much is against your best interests. We spent a lot of time making sure that as we went along that it felt like the first game but... better. We wanted it to feel familiar to veterans.



Presumably this attitude will continue with post-release content too?

Yeah. We are going to ship with several maps, but as a small team we are just focusing on getting the gameplay right at the moment. But we want to continue to add content after release and so one thing we've been saying from the beginning and we'll continue to say for those with expectations of a particular map from *Battle Cars* is that we will be working on maps long after release, and every single one is going to be free. We are never going to charge for them.

You'll be including a replay editor into the final game; did the PS4's Share feature play a part in that feature's creation?

Yes, but it was more of a validation in that feature was cool and we should go for it and really embrace the PlayStation 4's strengths by doing that feature. We had a similar feature in the original *Battle Cars* where you could upload to YouTube but this time we wanted to tailor it more to the PlayStation Share function because it's built right into the system, we didn't have to figure out a way to get to an outside network and make it work. We knew it would be perfect for us to support that, and it's another one of those features that we will evolve over time.

How has it been to develop on the PS4 when compared to the PS3?

Well there are two main advantages of the PS4 from our perspective. Number one: it is much easier to work on than the PS3 – people just say that and they leave it there – but the reason is the tools that they have built for the console make it very, very easy to move a project over from PC where most studios start their projects. The other – and I think this is more important – feature of the PS4 is just the climate it presents for the independent developers out there just like ourselves. On PS3 – and all the console eras that came before that generation – it was a fairly difficult process to publish your game on those consoles, to get your game distributed and have it appear in stores and to even get an extra marketing push from the console makers themselves. PS4 is just very indie developer friendly, because it is so good for delivering digital content and the way that it's set up, and because they highlight indie games so well it's actually just given us... well, it kind of feels like an extra partner in making our game more successful.

WORST WAYS TO DIE

Lots of bad things happen in videogames, often with hideous consequences. Collected here for your reading displeasure are a few of the foulest...



Dead Space 2

CAUSE OF DEATH
Major mechanical malfunction

THERE'S A SCENE towards the end of *Dead Space 2* where Isaac Clarke comes across a device used to inject subjects with the Marker codes needed to fully become one with the alien artifact. In typical horror style, this isn't like a flu jab – the needle needs to go directly into the pupil of the subject's eye. Against his better judgement, Clarke clambers into the device and is restrained as you need to guide the needle into his panicked, darting eyes. Succeed and you still end up stabbing him directly in the eye, which sucks. Mess up and... well, the drill-like device makes short work of his head. Surgical precision, this ain't and there are few scenes in all of gaming that make us cringe harder.



Mortal Kombat X

CAUSE OF DEATH
Extremely sore throat

THERE ARE ALL kinds of nasty things that Takeda could do with his notched whip of his, but we never saw this coming. It starts off pretty standard, a couple of well-placed slashes lopping off the foe's arms. As they bleed out, he performs one final thrust that sends the whip straight into the aghast mouth of the victim. With a flick of the wrist, the whip erupts its hidden blades in a wave towards the mouth, latching onto the throat as Takeda gives a quick tug to remove the whole thing through the mouth. Which really isn't very nice. The victim just sort of stands there for a bit with their insides on the outside before keeling over dead, on account of a lack of insides. Rude.



Resident Evil 4

CAUSE OF DEATH

Unsupervised use of gardening tools

THE TELLTALE INDUSTRIAL drone that tells you *Resident Evil 4*'s chainsaw-wielding baghead is on his way is one of the most terrifying sounds in all of gaming, and it only gets worse when you've seen what a chainsaw can do to a human body. There's one abrupt decapitation animation (which is bad enough) but the elongated sequence is even worse, blade chewing through flesh as Leon struggles in vain to break free. Capcom tried to build on this terror in later games by introducing enemies with dual-bladed saws and other such silliness but as is often the case, the original is still the best. Even now, any part of the audiovisual experience of facing Doctor Salvatore fills us with dread. The terrifying hessian sack mask; the revving of the motorised blade; the crash as he burst unexpectedly through a door. This is the stuff of nightmares – seriously, just don't let this bastard get close to you.



Sleeping Dogs

CAUSE OF DEATH

Improper garbage disposal

BEING ABLE TO put people in bins is the best part of *Sleeping Dogs*. It's just so gloriously dumb. Enemies tossed into open skips have the lid slammed shut on them and can seemingly never escape, left to rot with the rest of the trash. Perhaps they die of disease, or perhaps simply of shame. We may never know for sure. Still, at least it's really funny. That's all that really matters.

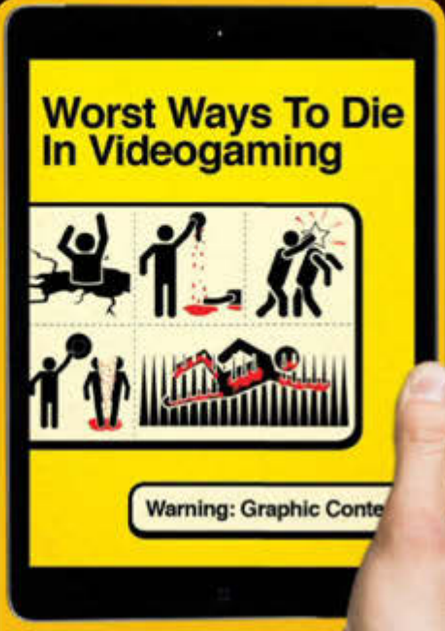


The Darkness II

CAUSE OF DEATH

Rectal spine removal

WHAT'S WORSE THAN having your spine ripped out? Why, having it ripped out through your ass, of course! Jackie's ruthless tentacles commit all kinds of horrific acts over the course of two awesome *Darkness* games but this is the worst of the lot by far. Until *Mortal Kombat X* came along, we hadn't winced as hard at a game as we did at this straight-up nasty display...



IF YOU'RE IN the mood for a bit more ultraviolence, perhaps you'd enjoy our latest digital-only special issue, which collects and celebrates the most vicious, gory and humiliating ways to die in gaming. Check it out: **www.greatdigitalmags.com**



EXTENDED PLAY

GRAN TURISMO

With a 2015/2016 release slapped on Gran Turismo 7, we think you're going to be waiting a while to get your hands on it. So you'll have to look elsewhere to satiate your racing sim cravings...



AYRTON SENNA

■ **DEPENDING HOW LONG** you stuck with *Gran Turismo 6*, you might have missed the free Ayrton Senna DLC that developer Polyphony released in the year after the game's release. The Ayrton Senna Tribute pack puts you in the shoes of the legendary F1 driver and lets you retrace the steps of his career. This ranges from taking the wheel of the #17 DAP Racing Kart that Senna drove to win the World Karting Championships to getting in the hot seat of Senna's famous Lotus 97T. Tracks like Brands's Hatch and Monza have been remodelled in the mode to restore to their original layouts and match the era in which Senna was driving.

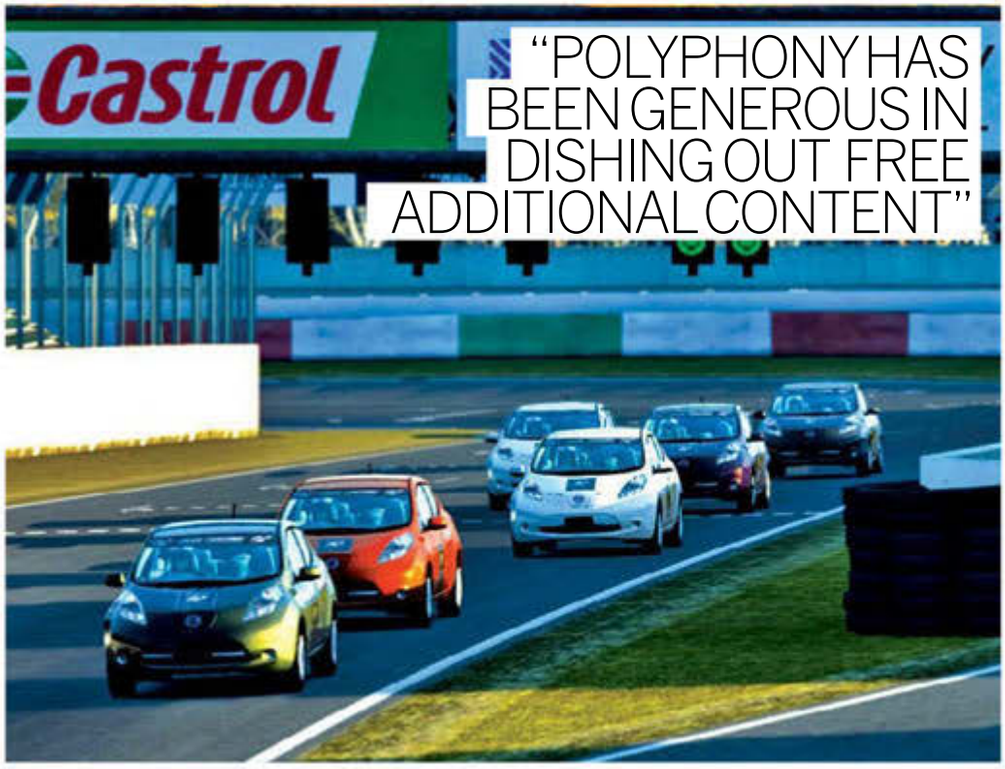
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FREE CARS

■ **POLYPHONY HAS BEEN** generous in dishing out free additional content since *Gran Turismo 6*'s release in the form of new cars and tracks. If you like the *Gran Turismo* games, then there's a chance that you're obsessive about your cars, so the chance to add a few more to your virtual collection and test them out on the track without opening your wallet is an offer that's too good to refuse. The cars in question are concept cars developed by real life car manufacturers and includes the likes of the 'Volkswagen GTI Roadster Vision Gran Turismo', the 'Lexus LF-LC GT Vision Gran Turismo' and the 'Subaru VIZIV GT Vision Gran Turismo'.



GT ACADEMY

■ **IF YOU FANCY** yourself as a pretty handy *Gran Turismo* player, then you've got to get involved in GT Academy. It'll give you the chance to graduate to taking part in a real race. Of course, there are a few stages to go through first. The first stage consists of wining online qualifiers in *Gran Turismo*, from which you can then progress into the National Finals. Win that and you'll then participate in a race camp. From there you will go on to take part in an intensive driving development program. Make it all the way through this year's competition and you'll get the chance to drive in the Dubai 24 hours race set for January 16.



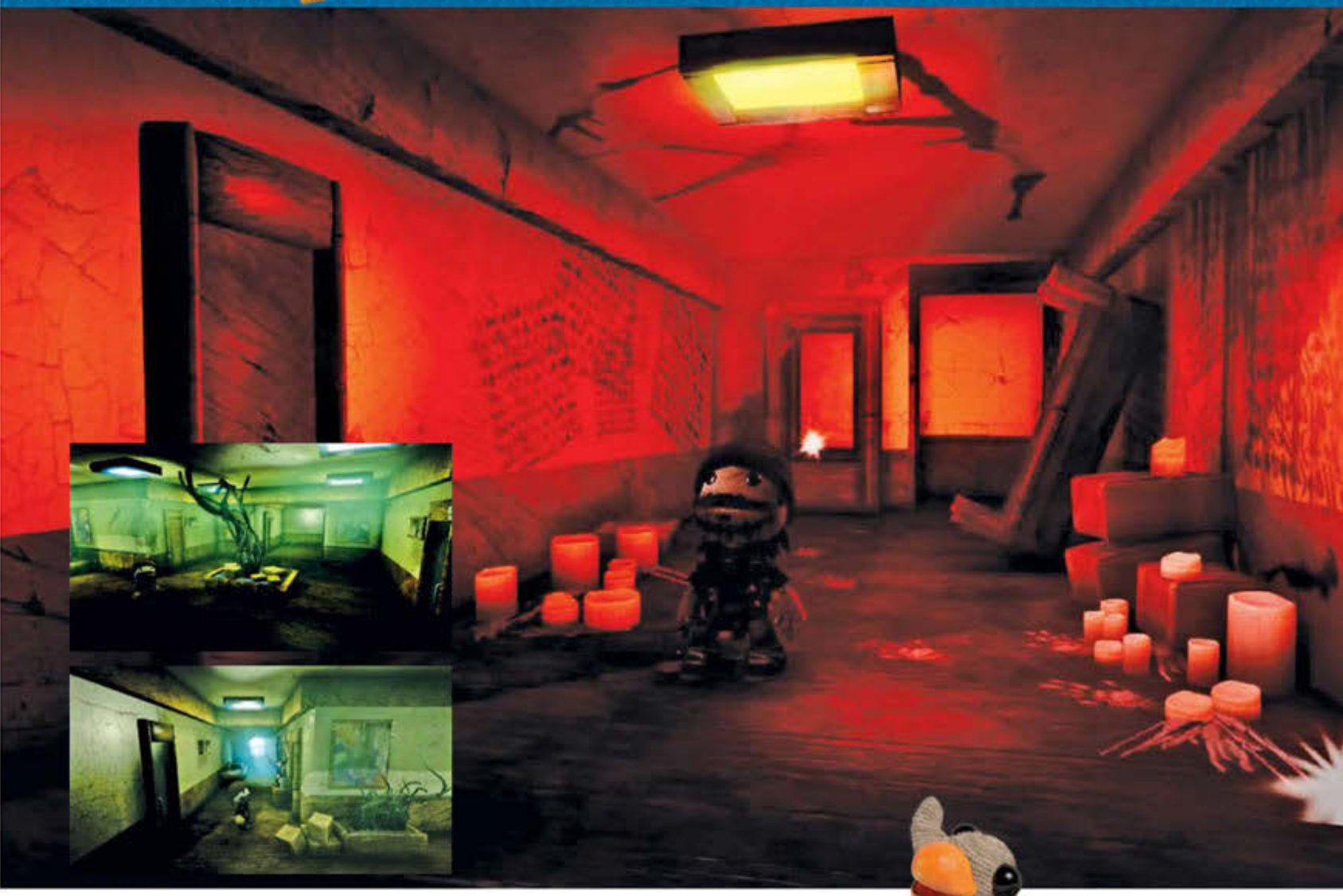
PROJECT CARS

■ **IF YOU'RE HARDCORE** into your sim racing, then there's a clear candidate to use as a substitute to the notoriously detailed and obsessive *Gran Turismo* until *Gran Turismo 7* appears. That is the equally detailed and obsessive *Project Cars*. Its cars and tracks look uncannily realistic and it has also got a 24 hour Le Mans race that lasts a legitimate 24 hours. In other words, if you want realism, *Project Cars* has to be your go-to racer for now.



B-SPEC

■ **FIRST INTRODUCED IN** *Gran Turismo 4*, continued into *GT5* and patched into *GT6* after release, B-Spec is a mode where you create and manage AI drivers. Each driver will have different personalities and skills that will affect how they drive. You can issue commands to the AI drivers during races and, as they improve, use them to help you progress through career events.



MASTERCLASS

LITTLEBIGPLANET 3

We check out a spin on the survival horror genre, featuring some clever movement trickery that lets you move in full 3D

TIME TAKEN TO MAKE: Four weeks **NUMBER OF PLAYS:** 17,733 **TIMES HEARTED:** 1,762

■ **WE HAVE TO** admit to having a soft spot for *LittleBigPlanet* levels that do something different. Whether it's randomly generated RPGs, top-down shooters or unique twists on platformers, it's impossible not to respect the effort and the energy that goes into using the *LBP* tools to make something extraordinary. Such as Project HILL Rebirth, a *Resident Evil*-style spin on the *LBP3* gameplay that does horror a little more tactfully. It's not a common genre in user-created levels, but when they are done, they're rarely done *this* well.

There's a tension to the experience from the start, with a cleverly done camera pan leading to a downtrodden corridor with grungy lighting. There's a great amount of detail in everything in this level, from light fixtures to smartly placed decoration and stickers. It's worth noting that this isn't a top-down level, either, meaning there's a lot more quality in the detail than you can get otherwise. In fact, it uses a similar movement control to the one used in Steve_big_guns' level, meaning you can move in complete 3D space without having to hop between each of the individual layers. Not only that, but your movement is slowed to a walk, forcing you to take in the atmosphere. There are a handful of notes dotted around the level that give a little back story – a neat touch – and it all adds to the detail of this level.

The breed of horror isn't a violent sort either, and that's something that the level's creator, acdramon, intended. He knew that the level couldn't get picked by the *LBP* team if it was too violent, and instead made sure the horror here was more psychological. There are hauntings to find and they're downright







△○×□ The detail on the enemies – especially the bosses – is incredible. A smart use of simple geometry and lots of decoration makes for some really brilliant design.



△○×□ The hauntings happen as you play the level, but to get them all you'll need to explore a little bit more. Some of them are really quite creepy.

creepy, sudden shifts in lighting or jolted animations – the sort you might find in a Japanese horror film.

Special mention should go to the audio, too, in every form it takes. There isn't much in the way of a backing track, for example, just subtle chimes or the sound of a rusted swing set gently blowing in the wind as you explore the environment. Combining this with the use of heavy footsteps as you move or rustling of paper when reading notes makes these sensations all the more impactful – and when there's so little in the way of sound otherwise it makes hauntings even scarier. Voice acting, as well, is really very impressive. There are only a few uses of dialogue in the level, but it's much better than anything we've seen in a user level before, and really helps add to the overall atmosphere and quality.

Admittedly, the gameplay itself is a little limited, but this is a game whose inspiration is found in the likes of *Resident Evil* or *Silent Hill*. These are games that thrive on an uneasy sense of exploration and while there have been levels that have done that before in *LBP3*, this one is probably the best example of it. We won't spoil the ending for you since that's part of the fun of this creation, but it certainly shows its creator knows a lot about the horror genre and some of the more varied ways to instil fear.

There's been a lot of thought put into this level and while it might not be as terrifying as its inspiration, it is certainly one of the most detailed horror experiences you'll find on *LBP*. We don't know if acdramon will make more stages like it, but you should definitely Heart Project HILL Rebirth.

CREATOR CURATOR



We have a chat with the creator, acdramon, about how he made his atmospheric horror level

What sorts of games inspired your level?
With Project HILL Rebirth, *P.T.* (RIP), *Silent Hill 2* and *Resident Evil* were the main games that inspired me. I'm a product of old school games so, naturally, I bought the *Resident Evil* PS4 remaster, downloaded *Silent Hill 2*, and bathed myself in *P.T.*.

What would you say is the trick to making good horror in *LittleBigPlanet*?
The trick to me is making a more subtle horror. If you want to aim for the game's Team Pick section, you can't have any hints of non-comical violence, blood, or anything that is usually in horror games. So you have to dig deeper. That's where my love for the *Silent Hill* games into play. Sure, *Silent Hill* had intense depiction of gore and blood, but there was something subconsciously creepy about that series. It didn't need to jump scare you or throw a dead body in your face every turn to genuinely freak you out.

What was the hardest part about making this level?
Once I got the look down and logic set, it became apparent to me the level would be a space issue. Fitting everything in there was an annoying task. In all honesty, Project HILL Rebirth made me take a few breaks from *LBP* to clear my head to think of new ways to save more space on the level.

Was it important to you to include all of the extra decorative details?
Small details are things I love as an artist outside of *LBP*. When I try to dive into a genre, I try to do it right. So with Project HILL Rebirth, it had to be 'right' in terms of its genre. Especially in horror games, things like detail and player choice are *big* and that influenced me. In my level, you didn't have to read every note, or find every ghost sighting to enjoy it or even complete the level. You don't have to go up to table to read the small little story behind it. It's through different play sessions where you may be like, 'oh wow, I didn't even get that ending on my first try. Let's see if there are others' – and that's so cool to me.

What new features in *LittleBigPlanet 3* helped you create your level the most?
Things like the Advanced In/Out tool, Opacity Tweaker, and Broadcast Chips were my babies when I was making this level. The 3D movement is actually made by my good friend Bagheadinc. That also uses Broadcast Chips and Advanced Movers. I doubt the level would be half as different and cool if not for those new *LBP3* features.

What are some of your favourite user-created levels in *LittleBigPlanet*?
I quite like unique levels, so things like Don't Linger In The Labyrinth! by NuclearFish and Treasure Hunter by Felkroth are just stunning. I've personally seen the creation of both of those levels (Treasure Hunter especially) and the work that went into creating them both were just, simply put, insanely creative. Those two levels helped pull me out of the slumps I got when making Project HILL Rebirth. Fact.

HOW TO...

MAKE GREAT OPEN WORLDS

A few tips and tricks on how developers can make a game's open world a little more Grand Theft Auto and a little less Watch Dogs...



■ **THERE ARE SOME** cardinal sins that open world games continue to commit time after time, and even the best in the business aren't immune to failure. However, great examples of open world adventures such as *GTA V*, *Far Cry 3* and *The Witcher 3* all nailed it and by looking at where they succeeded, we can extrapolate the scientific magic behind it and learn a few secrets. Here's how developers can learn from the best to give us more compelling open worlds to explore...

FILL IT WITH DETAIL

■ **IT'S OFTEN THE** small touches that make an open world feel believable. That's something that Rockstar has proven time and again, with *GTA V* being a prime example of a game that displays an insane level of attention to detail in the way that the city of Los Santos has been constructed. That game shows that the micro matters as much as the macro – in other words, it's all very well building a huge world, but without the little flourishes – like the fact that street performers will get annoyed if you take a picture of them without tipping them – that help that world feel like a real place, it's all for naught.









MAKE QUESTS MATTER

■ **THE THING THAT** annoys us the most about open world games is when they fill the world with crap that's obviously just there so that the developers can say it has got X hours of content. You should be putting stuff in the world because it's fun, not for the sake of the game having more 'stuff' (we're looking at you, *Assassin's Creed*). *The Witcher 3* is the perfect example of a game that does the former. That game treats every quest as a story that's as worthy of your attention as any other. That means that you end up playing them because they're interesting, not because you want the experience or rewards.

DON'T RUSH THEM

■ **THIS ONE MIGHT** seem obvious, but apparently it's not, because we see open world games that have suffered from tight development schedules all the time. The ambitious nature of those games means they are particularly vulnerable to bugs and glitches, so it's vital that developers take the time to get them right, unless they want to be seen as a joke, as was the case with *Assassin's Creed Unity*. We'd much rather wait for a polished *Fallout 4*, for example, than end up with another *Fallout* game that's borderline broken on release, like *Fallout: New Vegas* was.

HIDE SURPRISES

■ **ONE OF THE** great things about open world games is that they offer the opportunity to explore and discover things for ourselves. Making sure that there are things hidden around the world makes that process of exploration feel worthwhile. Whether it's a hidden quest, an Easter Egg or an emergent event, creating the illusion that you've done or found something no one else has is a great way of making an open world feel special.

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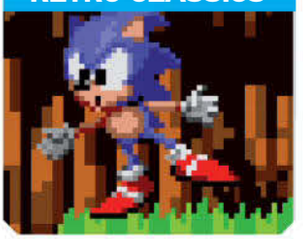
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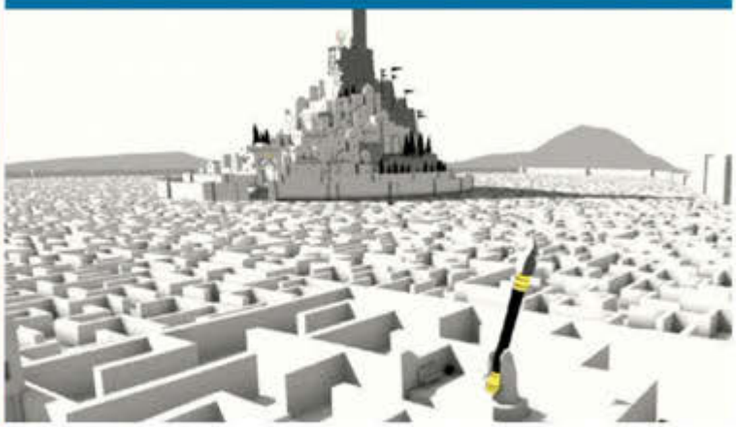
TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE

THE UNFINISHED SWAN

PLATFORM: PS4/PS3/VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5
TROPHIES: 10 0 2 1 7

■ **YOU CAN NET** most Trophies in *The Unfinished Swan* in one playthough. The only thing you're going to have to keep an eye out for are the 19 pages of the storybook for the 'Page Turner' Trophy, and 64 balloons for the 'Sniper' Trophy, otherwise nothing is missable. The only tricky Trophy here is 'Minimalist' – which requires you throw no more than three paintballs during Chapter 1. Once the main game is completed, jump into Chapter 3 to nab yourself 'Rocketeer' and 'Spaceman'. Equip the sniper you'll have unlocked from popping all the balloons, make a small blueprint box, pick it up with Square and fire it up into the sky after activating the sniper with Triangle. Then, just pepper the box with paintballs until both Trophies pop.





RACE THE SUN

PLATFORM: PS4/PS3/VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 4/5
TROPHIES: 13 0 1 3 9

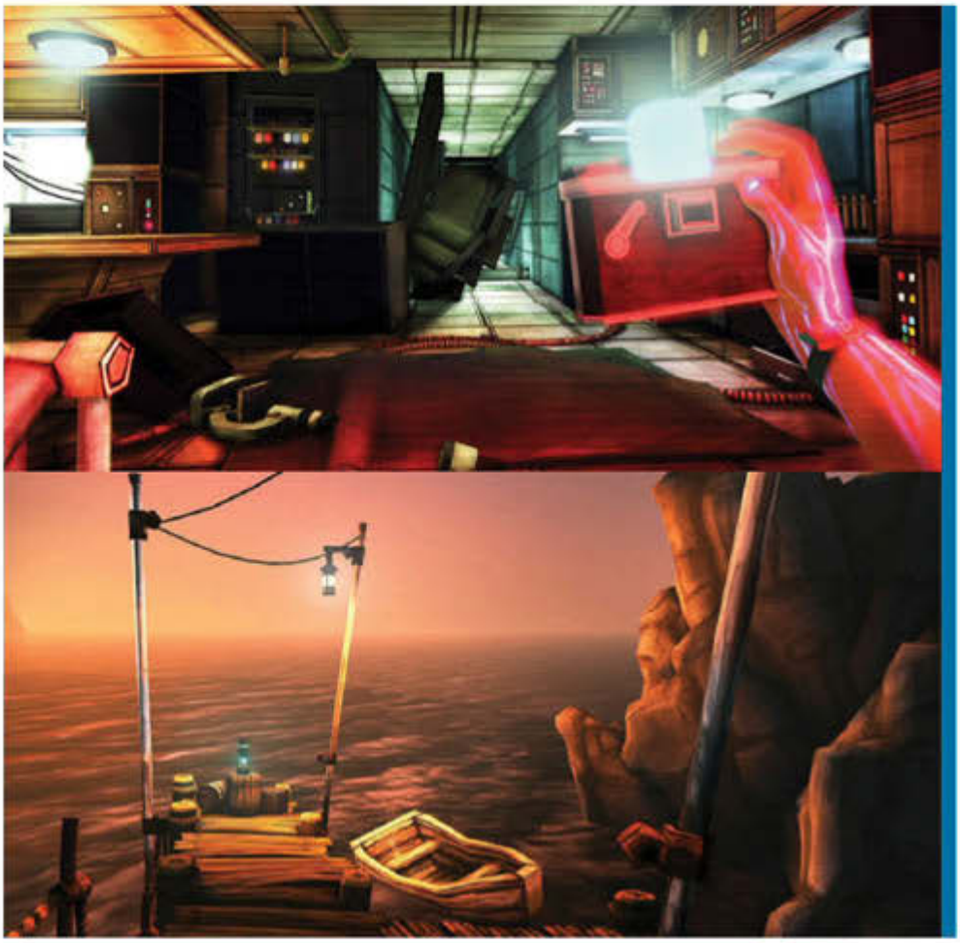
■ **THIS GAME AND** its Trophies are all dependent on your skill. Clearing all 25 levels isn't too bad in and of itself, so just blast through them and try and get a feel for the game – you'll grab five completion Trophies for your trouble. In the early levels, aim to unlock 'Cirrus' (by gaining enough height to touch a cloud) and 'Bishop' (complete a level without hitting an obstacle). 'Lindbergh' and 'Yeager' require you to get perfect runs so make use of Warps and Portal Keys. For the remaining four Trophies, you'll want to equip the best support attachments you can – 'Knight' and 'King' Trophies' unlocking will benefit from Magnet 2 and Turning Jets. Scoring 5 million in one run will take you more than a few attempts, but learning how the game generates its maps is key, so even if you fail a run, use it as a learning curve. Just remember, if it starts getting frustrating, take a break.

GUACAMELEE! SUPER TURBO CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

PLATFORM: PS4 **DIFFICULTY:** 4/5
TROPHIES: 32 1 6 7 18

■ **THERE'S A TRICK** you can do to ensure the collection of every Trophy in your first playthrough – simply enter the Konami code in the main menu to unlock Hard mode. This means you can grab all Trophies in one fell swoop. It's also worth noting you should start your game in slot 2, to nab the 'Next Gen!' Trophy. You'll pick up about half of the Trophies as you play through the story mode. Once you've passed through the story, the final checkpoint will remain active, and you can go back to anywhere in the game at will and chip away at that 100% completion score. The 'achieve a 200 combo' challenge can be a little tricky, but if you're struggling, the best place to unlock this is in Chamber 2 of De Inferno Tower. If you end up killing the enemies before this pops, the next Chamber has invincible enemies you can wail on instead. The last unlock will be finishing the De Inferno Tower. Make sure to learn the correct counter moves and you should get through it without a problem.





ETHER ONE

PLATFORM: PS4 **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5
TROPHIES: 13 1 10 2 0

■ **WE KNOW, WE** know – you're looking at those numbers in the header and your jaw is hanging open in disbelief. *Ether One* is *ludicrous* and a Trophy hunter's dream; you'll unlock practically every Trophy just by breezing through the main game, and you'll be rewarded with a simply stupid amount of high-end rewards for the pleasure. Better yet? The game is no longer than five hours long (at a push):

"ETHER ONE IS LUDICROUS AND A TROPHY HUNTER'S DREAM"

that's two Golds per hour. Just make sure to check the requirements of each Trophy before you dive in; they're easy to get, but sometimes they require a little extra effort (listening to everything The Knocker has to say, for example, takes a while). It's a pretty cerebral and well put together little puzzle game, and some of the Trophies are collection based ('Lucid', 'Defragmentation', and 'Clever Clogs' are a few standout mentions) but otherwise, we think you'll have the most fun with this game out of all the month's PlayStation Plus offerings.

MURASAKI BABY

PLATFORM: VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5
TROPHIES: 11 0 1 5 5

■ **YOU'LL COMPLETE THIS** game in no more than two hours, and you'll be given every Trophy for the honor. If you're planning on tackling anything this month, just for the sake of upping your Trophy level, start here – you're unlikely to get an easier ride anytime soon. The only thing you'll need to watch out for is 'They Can't Get Along...', it's the one missable Trophy in the entire game – to avoid that irritating fate, just hold your balloon over every picture in the Twisted Twins' house and 'tune' all the pictures in and you're golden. There are only six, and you can't really miss them anyway. It's also worth noting that you won't want to skip the end credits – the game's only Gold Trophy will pop only if you watch the credits to the end.





HOHOKUM

PLATFORM: PS4/PS3/VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5
TROPHIES: 12 0 1 2 9

■ **YOUR FIRST PORT** of call in *Hohokum* should be simply completing every level – you're not directed to any specific goals in the game itself, so you might need to spend some time observing the levels to understand precisely what you have to do. You should be able to spot the seams between the levels easily enough, though. You need to find 15 serpentine friends to finish the game, which will net you nine Bronze and two Silver Trophies. All that's left then is to grab the Gold, by running through the game in less than 60 minutes to unlock 'Hohokquick' – the best bet here is to pay close attention to the trickier levels on your first playthrough and compose a makeshift map of sorts in your head. If you can remember the locations of the 'friends' you need to unlock from the first time round, you can do this in about 50 minutes, giving you a pretty decent margin of error.

INSTANT GAME COLLECTION

FROBISHER SAYS!

If you are looking for something a bit different, you can't do much better than this brilliantly bizarre collection of PS Vita minigames



■ **IT'S HARDLY NEW**, given that it was released way back in 2012 as a means to show off the Vita's features, but that's no reason not to give it a go. Indeed, we bet there's a fair few of you out there who have picked up a Vita since then and didn't even know that *Frobisher Says!* existed, or, better yet, know that it's free.

It's not the most complex or in-depth game in the world, but there's something about its silly, surreal tone and colorful presentation that makes it intensely likable. The game kicks you through each quick-fire minigame at a brisk pace as you chase high scores and claw yourself up the leaderboards or beat friends in pass-the-pad (or the pass-the-Vita, in this case) score battles.

To give you but a small sample on what's on offer in *Frobisher Says!*, there's a game that uses the touch screen to simulate a game of Snap, one which utilises the gyroscope as you balance a unicycling unicorn, a game where you tap 'Colin' on the shoulder using the rear touchpad and a game where the camera ensures that you are looking away from the Vita's screen while a boy eats fish out of a bucket. You can see why we suggested that the game is rather odd.

The game's quick-fire nature means it's ideal if you frequently use your Vita while on the go. Even if that is not the case, we would recommend you give it a shot just to see what this weird little title is all about.

MEGA FUN PACK

When we say Frobisher Says! is free, that includes the DLC too, meaning you get games like this:



MILK MY MAMMOTH

Here you've got to milk a mammoth – the clue is kind of in the name with this one.



LIGHT LEONARD'S LAMP

This one is a platformer in which you must collect fireflies as you jump across platforms.



FOLLOW THESE IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

Or, in other words, make a fool of yourself by putting your nose on the Vita screen and your knee on the rear touchpad.

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THE HISTORY OF DEUS EX



WE FOLLOW UP on our video about the classic *Deus Ex* to discuss its oft-maligned sequel: *Invisible War*. It is really as bad as people say?

SUPER DUNGEON BROS



WE GO HANDS-ON with the rather fun *Super Dungeon Bros.* and tell you how this co-op dungeon crawler is shaping up.

ASSASSIN'S CREED SYNDICATE



ASSASSIN'S CREED IS back, but is there any reason to be excited?

MAGNETIC: CAGE CLOSED



WE DISCUSS WHETHER this *Portal*-like puzzler is worth getting pumped for.

ARK: SURVIVAL EVOLVED



DINOSAURS MEETS DAYZ. What's not to like with this survival sim?

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Keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter channels for information on our Twitch tournaments, where you can play videogames with us for the world to watch! The game changes each time, and the best players will win prizes – free games, or just some of the other tat that we found around our office. Come and join in the fun next time and maybe you could win something neat.



BLOODBORNE

If you fancy a laugh, our designer, Liam, has been streaming *Bloodborne*. He is pretty rubbish at it, and he gets really annoyed when he's not good at videogames. Come and share in our fun and point and laugh at him.



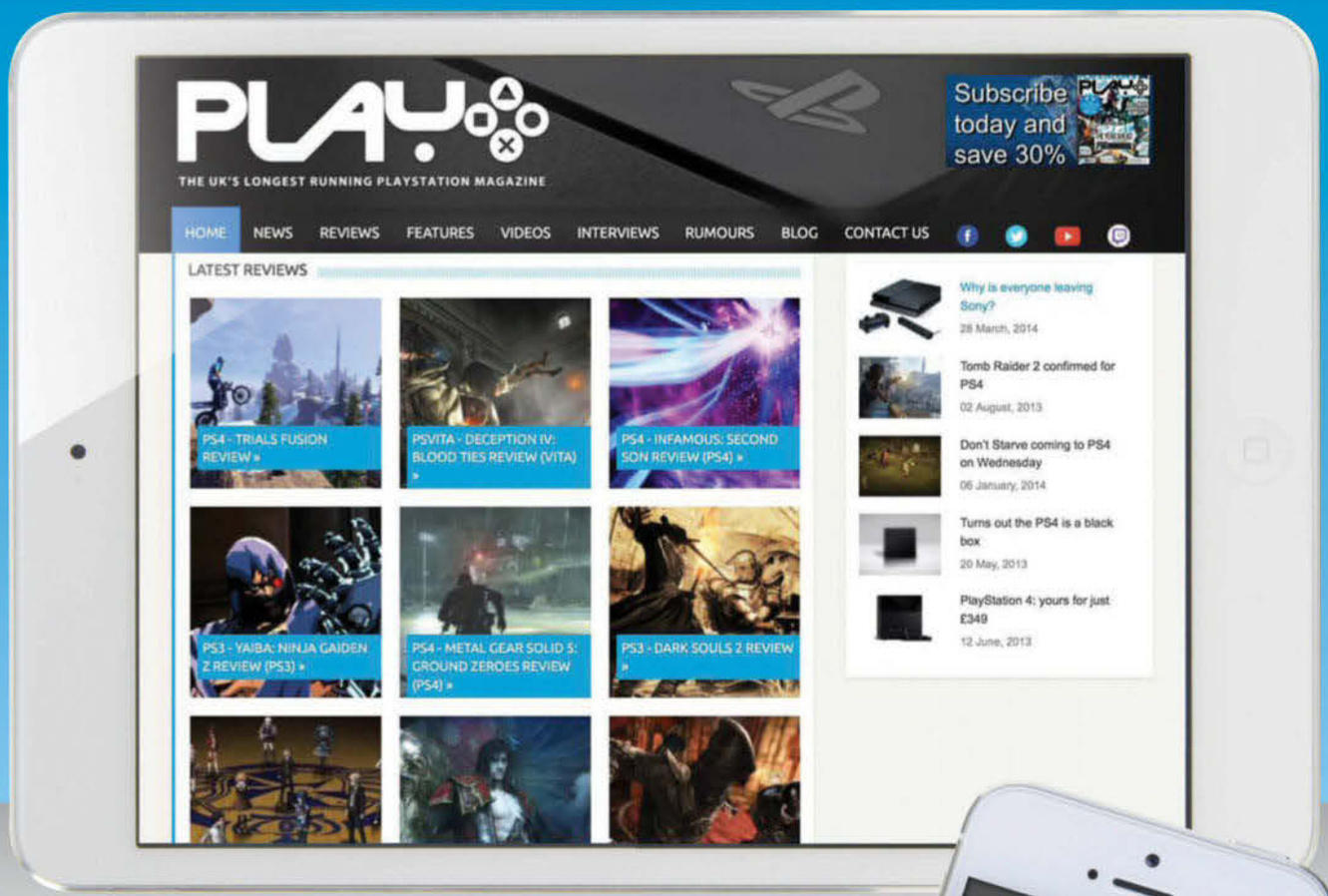
DEVIL MAY CRY 4 SE

Come and see why we are the best at *Devil May Cry 4* as we take on the HD remaster on PS4. It is one of our favourite in the series, and did we tell you that we're good at it? What's that hissing sound? Oh, it's just all those 'S' ranks that we're getting...

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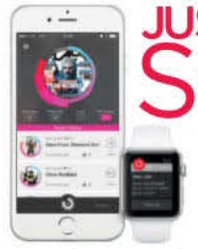
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LET'S PLAY... RPGS



LUKE ALBIGÉS
INFINITE UNDISCOVERY

3 Shit title aside, this dodgy excuse for a JRPG spends most of its running time trying to convince you that the obvious impending plot twist isn't what you think... and then it is. Gutter trash.



LIAM WARR
SKYRIM

9 I honestly didn't know what to do when starting *Skyrim*, the first few hours were spent on the run after killing a bloke's chicken by accident. The world was alright, too, I suppose.



DREW SLEEP
FINAL FANTASY VIII

10 This was my gateway drug into RPGs and it has mandated an addiction for Renzokuken and Triple Triad since my first taste back in 2000. Best *FF* game ever; I'll Angelo Cannon anyone who thinks otherwise.



PAUL WALKER-EMIG
FALLOUT: NEW VEGAS

8 It may have been broken on release, but with (most of) the bugs now ironed out, *New Vegas* reveals itself to be a fantastic RPG that opens itself to player's choice in a way that few modern games do.

PS4



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An addictive and accomplished shoot-'em-up, *Resogun* is an indie delight and a surprise PS4 launch highlight. Awesome stuff.

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Batman: Arkham Origins	237	8
Battle Fantasia	**176**	**7**
Battlefield 1943	182	9
Battlefield: Bad Company	**168**	**8**
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	9
Battlefield 3	**212**	**8**
Battleship	219	4
Bayonetta*	**187**	**9**
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	9
Beat Hazard Ultra	**213**	**7**
Beat Sketcher	201	8
Beyond Good & Evil HD	**207**	**8**
Beyond: Two Souls	236	7
Binary Domain	**216**	**7**
Bionic Commando	179	8
Bionic Commando Rearmed	**169**	**8**
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	6
BioShock	**172**	**9**
BioShock 2	189	8
BioShock Infinite	**230**	**9**
Birds Of Steel	217	5
BlackSite	**163**	**4**
Blade Kitten	197	7
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	**160**	**5**
Blast Factor	152	7
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	**190**	**8**
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	9
Blazing Angels	**151**	**5**
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	6
Blitz: The League II	**172**	**6**
Blokus	202	5
BloodRayne: Betrayal	**211**	**6**
Blur	193	8
Bodycount	**210**	**5**
Bomberman Ultra	185	8
Borderlands	**185**	**8**
Borderlands 2	223	9
Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel	**250**	**6**
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	7
Braid	**188**	**9**
Brink	206	6
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	**233**	**8**
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	7
Brütal Legend	**185**	**7**
Bulletstorm	203	8
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	**235**	**5**
Burnout Crash	211	7
Burnout Paradise	**162**	**8**
Burn Zombie Burn	178	8
Buzz! Quiz TV	**168**	**8**
Buzz! Quiz World	185	7
Calling All Cars	**155**	**8**
Call Of Duty 3	151	5
Call Of Duty: World At War	**173**	**6**
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	9
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	**186**	**9**
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	8
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	**199**	**9**
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	8
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	**181**	**8**
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	8
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	**208**	**3**
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	7
Castle Crashers	**200**	**9**
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	7
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	**197**	**9**
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	8
Carnival Island	**213**	**5**
Catan	195	8
Cars 2	**208**	**6**
The Cave	230	7
Catherine	**215**	**6**
Champion Jockey	210	5
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	**178**	**8**
Child Of Eden	211	8
Chime Super Deluxe	**203**	**8**
Civilization Revolution	168	9
Clash Of The Titans	**193**	**6**

THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

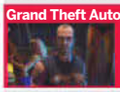
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt	**10**
Mortal Kombat X	**9**
Assassin's Creed Chronicles: China	**7**
Titan Souls	**7**
Broken Age	**5**

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GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	6
The Club	**163**	**8**
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	9
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	**184**	**8**
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	6
Commander's Challenge	**185**	**6**
Command & Conquer	175	4
Comet Crash	**186**	**8**
Comix Zone	210	6
Conan	**160**	**7**
Condemned 2	165	7
Costume Quest	**199**	**7**
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	5
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	**223**	**9**
Crash Commando	174	8
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	**218**	**3**
Crazy Machines Elements	210	7
Create	**199**	**7**
Critter Crunch	188	9
Cross Edge	**182**	**5**
Crystal Defenders	184	4
Crysis 2	**204**	**7**
Crysis 3	230	6
Cubixx HD	**207**	**7**
The Cursed Crusade	211	4
Damnation	**181**	**3**
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	3
Dance Dance Revolution	**201**	**5**
Dante's Inferno	189	8
Dark Mist	**164**	**5**
The Darkness	154	9
The Darkness II	**215**	**7**
Dark Sector	165	6
Dark Souls	**211**	**9**
Dark Souls II	242	9
Darkstalkers Resurrection	**230**	**8**
Dark Void	188	8
Darksiders	**188**	**8**
Darksiders II	221	8
DC Universe Online	**202**	**8**
de Blob 2	203	6
Dead Or Alive 5	**223**	**7**
Dead Island	210	7
Dead Island: Riptide	**231**	**6**
Dead Rising 2	197	8
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	**211**	**6**
Dead Space	172	9
Dead Space 2	**201**	**9**
Dead Space 3	228	7
Dead Space: Extraction	**203**	**8**
Dead Space: Ignition	199	4
Dead To Rights: Retribution	**192**	**6**
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	8
Dead Nation	**201**	**8**
Deadpool	233	6
DeathSpank	**195**	**8**
Def Jam: Icon	151	6
Def Jam Rapstar	**199**	**7**
Defiance	231	5
Demon's Souls	**193**	**9**
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	2
Derrick The Deathfin	**227**	**7**
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	9
Devil May Cry 4	**163**	**9**
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	8
Diablo III	**235**	**9**
DiRT 3	206	8
DiRT Showdown	**219**	**7**
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	8
Dishonored	**224**	**9**
Disney Infinity	235	8
DJ Hero	**186**	**9**
DJ Hero 2	198	8
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	**220**	**3**
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	6
Double Dragon Neon	**224**	**4**
DmC Devil May Cry	227	9
Dragon Age: Origins	**186**	**8**
Dragon Age II	203	6
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	**186**	**4**
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	6
Dragon's Crown	**235**	**8**
Dragon's Dogma	218	8
Driver: San Francisco	**209**	**7**
Duke Nukem Forever	207	3
D&D: Chronicles Of Mystara	**233**	**8**
Dungeon Siege III	206	8
Dust 514	**233**	**5**
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	5
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	**181**	**4**
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	4
Dynasty Warriors 8	**234**	**7**
Earthworm Jim HD	196	8
EA Sports Active 2	**200**	**8**
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	7
EA Sports MMA	**198**	**8**
Eat Lead	178	3
Eat Them!	**202**	**6**
echochrome	169	8
echochrome II	**202**	**8**
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	6
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	**152**	**9**
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	9
Elefunk	**170**	**4**
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	7
Enchanted Arms	**152**	**6**
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	6
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	**197**	**8**
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	5
Eternal Sonata	**176**	**8**
Eufloria	212	8
Everybody's Golf 5	**158**	**8**
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	9
Explodemon	**203**	**7**
Eye Of Judgment	159	6
EyePet	**185**	**8**
F1 2011	211	7
F1 2012	**223**	**7**
F1 Race Stars	226	6
FaceBreaker	**170**	**5**
Fairy Fencer F	250	4
Fallout 3	**173**	**10**
Fallout: New Vegas	198	8
Family Guy: Back To The Multiverse	**227**	**4**
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	3
Far Cry 2	**172**	**7**
Far Cry 3	226	8
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	**231**	**8**
Fat Princess	183	6
Fatal Inertia EX	**168**	**6**
FEAR	151	8
FEAR 2: Project Origin	**176**	**8**
FEAR 3	208	6
FIFA 12	**210**	**8**
FIFA 13	223	8
FIFA 14	**236**	**9**
FIFA Street (2012)	217	7
Final Fight: Double Impact	**193**	**9**
The Fight	199	4
Fight Night Champion	**203**	**8**
Fight Night Round 3	151	8
Fight Night Round 4	**181**	**8**
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	8
Final Fantasy XIII	**190**	**8**
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	8
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	**240**	**8**
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	5
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	**230**	**5**
Flight Control HD	198	8
Flock!	**179**	**7**
Folklore	158	6
Front Mission Evolved	**198**	**5**
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	5
From Dust	**211**	**8**
Fuel	180	4
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	**151**	**6**
Fuse	232	7
Game Of Thrones	**220**	**3**
Gatling Gears	207	6
Genji: Days Of The Blade	**151**	**3**
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	8
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	**219**	**6**
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	8
GI Joe	**183**	**2**
The Godfather	151	3
The Godfather II	**178**	**4**
God Of War III	190	9
God Of War: Ascension	**230**	**9**
God Of War Collection*	188	9
God Of War Collection: Volume II	**210**	**7**
The Golden Compass	162	3
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	**213**	**6**
Gotham City Imposters	216	7
Gran Turismo 5	**200**	**8**
Gran Turismo 6	239	8
Grand Theft Auto IV	**166**	**9**
Grand Theft Auto V	**236**	**10**
 Rockstar's latest is a masterpiece; the perfect swansong for the generation and a wonderful addition to the franchise.		
Greed Corp	**191**	**7**
Green Day: Rock Band	194	7
Grid 2	**232**	**7**
Grid Autosport	246	6
GTI Club+	**174**	**7**
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	9
Guardians Of Middle-earth	**227**	**7**
Guitar Hero III	160	9
Guitar Hero 5	**184**	**8**
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	6
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	**182**	**7**
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	8
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	**189**	**6**
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	7
Guitar Hero World Tour	**173**	**9**
Gundemonium Collection	197	8
Gunstar Heroes	**181**	**8**
Hamsterball	194	7
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	**182**	**6**
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	3
Haze	**167**	**6**
Heavenly Sword	157	7
Heavy Rain	**189**	**9**
Heavy Weapon	187	7
Heroes Over Europe	**184**	**4**
Hitman: Absolution	225	9
Hitman HD Trilogy	**230**	**7**
Homefront	203	6
The House Of The Dead 4	**218**	**8**
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	7
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	**207**	**5**
Hustle Kings	190	8
Hyperdimension Neptunia	**202**	**2**
I Am Alive	217	6
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD	**210**	**9**
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	7
The Incredible Hulk	**168**	**5**
inFamous	180	8
inFamous 2	**207**	**8**
Inferno Pool	181	8
Injustice: Gods Among Us	**231**	**8**
Inversion	220	4
Iron Man	**166**	**5**
Iron Man 2	193	5
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	**216**	**8**
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	5
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	**199**	**6**
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	6
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	**244**	**8**
Journey	216	9
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	**159**	**7**
Jurassic Park: The Game	194	6
Just Cause 2	**190**	**8**
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	7

**denotes import review*

TOP TEN OPEN WORLDS



1 **Grand Theft Auto V**



2 **Skyrim**



3 **Red Dead Redemption**



4 **GTA: San Andreas**



5 **Assassin's Creed II**



6 **Yakuza 5**



7 **Grand Theft Auto III**



8 **Fallout: New Vegas**



9 **Far Cry 3**

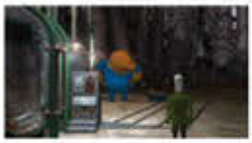


10 **Sleeping Dogs**

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



KINGDOM HEARTS
PLAY: FINAL FANTASY TYPE-0
If you like your JRPGs to take a more action-heavy approach like the *Kingdom Hearts* series, then the HD remake of *Final Fantasy Type-0* on PS4 may just be the *Final Fantasy* for you.



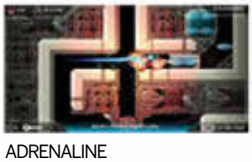
CLASSIC ADVENTURE GAMES
PLAY: GRIM FANDANGO
There's no need to sit around being wistfully nostalgic about great adventure games. Instead, play one of the best adventure games of all time in the form of the remastered version of *Grim Fandango* on the PS4 or Vita.



BLACK SHEEP
PLAY: BIOSHOCK 2
Many people gave *BioShock 2* a miss because it's not a 'proper' *BioShock* game. While it may not match the brilliance of the original underwater adventure, it's still a very good game.



KICKING THINGS
PLAY: BULLETSTORM
A mix of FPS and score attack game, *Bulletstorm* is a wonderfully silly shooter. You'll spend a lot of time lassoing enemies, then sending them on a return trip to their original location with a kick to the face.



ADRENALINE
PLAY: VELOCITY ULTRA
This 2D scrolling shooter is absolutely exhilarating when played as it is meant to be – that is, at speed. Whether you play *Velocity Ultra* or its sequel *2X* matters not. Just do yourself a favour and play some *Velocity*.

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	**196**	**7**
Katamari Forever	184	8
Kick-Ass The Game	**194**	**6**
Killer Is Dead	**235**	**7**
Killzone HD	225	6
Killzone 2	**176**	**9**
Killzone 3	202	8
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	**236**	**8**
Kingdom Hearts 2.5 HD ReMIX	252	9
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	**215**	**7**
The King Of Fighters XII	182	7
The King Of Fighters XIII	**213**	**8**
Knights Contract	202	5
Kung Fu Panda 2	**207**	**2**
Kung Fu Rider	196	6
Lair	**158**	**5**
Landit Bandit	195	6
LA Noire	**206**	**9**
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	9
The Last Guy	**171**	**9**
Last Rebellion	191	4
Lead And Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	**193**	**6**
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	5
Legendary	**173**	**6**
Lego Batman	173	6
Lego Batman 2	**221**	**8**
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	7
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	**213**	**6**
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	7
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	**187**	**7**
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	7
Lego Rock Band	**187**	**8**
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	7
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	**204**	**8**
Lego: The Lord Of The Rings	227	7
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	**180**	**2**
Limbo	209	9
LittleBigPlanet	**172**	**9**
LittleBigPlanet 2	**201**	**10**
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	**225**	**8**
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	8
Lollipop Chainsaw	**221**	**7**
London 2012	221	4
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	**199**	**6**
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	5
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	**213**	**4**
Lost Planet 2	192	8
Lost Planet 3	**236**	**5**
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	6
Lumines Supernova	**178**	**9**
Madagascar 3	224	3
Madden NFL 12	**209**	**8**
Madden NFL 13	223	8
Madden NFL Arcade	**188**	**5**
Mad Riders	220	7
Mafia II	**196**	**8**
MAG	189	6
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	**202**	**8**
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	7
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	**199**	**7**
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	9
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	**202**	**8**
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	6
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	**185**	**6**
Max Payne 3	219	7
Mass Effect 2	**201**	**10**
Mass Effect 3	216	9
Medal Of Honor	**198**	**8**
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	8
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	**225**	**7**
Mega Man 9	172	7
Mega Man 10	**192**	**8**
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	7
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	**228**	**9**
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.		
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	9
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	**214**	**9**
Metro: Last Light	231	6
Michael Jackson: The Experience	**205**	**5**
Microbot	202	5
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	**173**	**8**
Mindjack	202	3
Minecraft	**240**	**9**
Mini Ninjas	184	8
Mirror's Edge	**173**	**7**

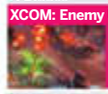
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
MLB: The Show 14	245	9
ModNation Racers	**192**	**8**
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	9
Mortal Kombat	**205**	**8**
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	173	6
MotoGP 13	**233**	**7**
Motorhead	173	6
MotorStorm	**151**	**9**
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	7
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	**172**	**9**
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	5
MX Vs ATV Alive	**206**	**4**
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	6
MX Vs ATV Untamed	**164**	**5**
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	6
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	**217**	**5**
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	8
Naughty Bear	**195**	**6**
NBA 2K12	211	8
NBA 2K13	**224**	**8**
NBA Jam	200	6
NBA Street: Homecourt	**151**	**6**
Need For Speed Carbon	151	7
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	**199**	**9**
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	**225**	**9**
Need For Speed: Most Wanted is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	**161**	**8**
Need For Speed Shift	184	8
Need For Speed: The Run	**213**	**6**
Need For Speed Undercover	173	7
NeverDead	**215**	**3**
Nier	192	6
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	**227**	**8**
NHL 12	210	7
NHL 13	**223**	**7**
NiGHTS Into Dreams...	224	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	**154**	**8**
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	8
Ninja Gaiden 3	**217**	**6**
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	8
Noby Noby Boy	**177**	**8**
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	8
Nucleus	**155**	**8**
Okami HD	225	9
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	**224**	**6**
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	7
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	**205**	**7**
The Orange Box	161	9
Outland	**207**	**7**
OutRun Online Arcade	180	8
Overlord II	**181**	**6**
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	9
Pain	**183**	**6**
Payday: The Heist	213	8
Payday 2	**235**	**8**
Peggle	189	9
Persona 4 Arena	**231**	**9**
Essential for both *Persona* fans and fighting game enthusiasts, *Persona 4 Arena* is an absolute joy to play.		
Persona 4 Arena Ultimax	250	9
PES 2012	**210**	**7**
PixelJunk 4am	220	4
PixelJunk Eden	**169**	**6**
PixelJunk Shooter	187	9
PixelJunk Shooter 2	**204**	**9**
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	7
PixelJunk Racers	**160**	**7**
Planet Minigolf	196	5
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	**225**	**8**
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	5
Poker Night 2	**232**	**5**
Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants	224	5
Portal 2	**205**	**10**
Prince Of Persia	174	8
Prince Of Persia: Classic	**173**	**6**
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	6
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	**200**	**8**
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	4
Prototype	**181**	**7**
Prototype 2	219	7
Puddle	**216**	**7**
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	4
Puppeteer	**236**	**7**
Pure	171	8

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Puzzle Chronicles	**194**	**7**
Puzzle Dimensions	208	8
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	**181**	**6**
Quantum Conundrum	221	9
Quantum Of Solace	**175**	**5**
Quantum Theory	197	2
Race Driver: GRID	**167**	**8**
Rachet & Clank: Q-Force	227	5
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	**179**	**8**
Rage	211	6
Rainbow Moon	**221**	**6**
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	9
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	**164**	**8**
Rango	203	5
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	**186**	**8**
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	6
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	**160**	**7**
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	9
Rayman Legends	**235**	**8**
Rayman Origins	212	8
Red Dead Redemption	**193**	**9**
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	6
Red Faction: Guerrilla	**180**	**8**
Remember Me	232	6
Renegade Ops	**211**	**7**
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	8
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	**211**	**7**
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	3
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	**232**	**7**
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	9
Resident Evil 5	**177**	**8**
Resident Evil 6	223	8
Resistance: Fall Of Man	**151**	**8**
Resistance 2	173	9
Resistance 3	**210**	**9**
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**denotes import review*

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING...

Watch out! Games!



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Destiny
WHY (was it chosen?)
Turns out the new expansion is a lot of fun...

LUKE ALBIGÉS

YEAH, I'M BACK. Willpower isn't exactly my strong suit and all it took was Bungie waving some new, ever-so-slightly better gear in my general direction and I was back on the *Destiny* train. As I hurtle further and further from my almighty backlog, at least I feel like I'm getting somewhere. By the time you read this, I should have all three of my characters up to level 34 – the first time I'll have had all of them maxed out – and I can see myself still dipping into the weekly Trials Of Osiris events in an attempt to get good. I'm fine with everything else in the game but for some reason, Trials is really good at pairing me with teams who excel at kicking my ass...



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Mortal Kombat X
WHY (was it chosen?)
I can do it, Mum!

PAUL WALKER-EMIG

WELL I NEVER thought this would happen. I've found a fighting game that I'm actually decent at. I've tried to jump into the genre now and again over the years, but, as much as the idea of getting into fighting games appeals to me, I always bounce off. With *Mortal Kombat X* and my boy Kano, though, I'm holding my own online and helping **Play** maintain its reputation as the best at *Mortal Kombat* in the office. Who knows, perhaps I might even graduate onto *Street Fighter* in the future...

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Bournemouth Dorset BH2 6EZ
☎ +44 (0) 1202 586200
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13-Issue subscription UK £51.90 / Europe £70 / ROW £80

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Printing and Distribution
Printed by Southernprint Ltd, 17-21 Factory Road, Upton Industrial Estate, Poole, Dorset, BH16 5SN

Distributed in the UK, Eire & the Rest of the World by Marketforce, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU
☎ 0203 148 3300

Distributed in Australia by Network Services (a division of Bauer Media Group), Level 21 Civic Tower, 66-68 Goulburn Street, Sydney, New South Wales 2000, Australia
☎ + 61 2 8667 5288

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